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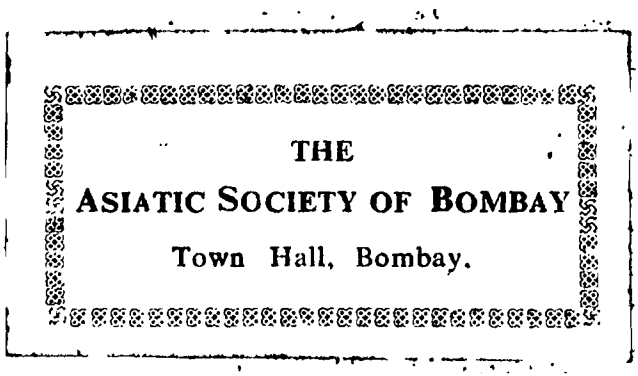

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THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

ST. JOHN.

A CONTRIBUTION TO BIBLICAL THEOLOGY.

BY

ERICH HAUPT.

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Translated, with an Introduction, by

W. B. POPE, D.D.,

DIDSBURY COLLEGE, MANCHESTER.

EDINBURGH:

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

1879.

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE present work does not profess to be a commentary. On the one hand, much is wanting in it that is ordinarily looked for in that kind of work; and, on the other hand, it contains much that goes beyond the design of a commentary in the ordinary sense. In both these directions some justification of its method will be thought necessary.

It is sufficiently obvious that, for the interpretation of any New Testament book in its sequence of thought and theological bearings, a great deal of work is demanded. The text must be critically examined, the exposition philologically established and sustained against contradictory views. As, further, no true expositor imagines that he can create out of his own resources what has been contributed by the current of exegesis during many generations, each one must make the past history of its exposition the foundation of his own. But all these labours of a critical, philological, polemic, and historical kind are still only the preparation for the proper business of exposition, that of intellectually reproducing the document in question. When the greater part of our commentaries are examined, we find that those preliminary labours are exhibited with such profuseness as to embarrass very much the independent view of the object of investigation as a whole. The mind of the reader is drawn in so many directions, and occupied with so many and separate questions, that the one single impression of the book itself is lost. That which the apostle

says retires into the background before that which he is supposed by this and that interpreter to have said. Indeed, the number is not small of those authors who think that with this preliminary toil their end is answered. Let any one subtract even from such distinguished and in their way unrivalled works as the exposition of the Ephesians by Harless, and the exegetical-critical commentary of Meyer and Huther, all that belongs to this preparatory labour, and then put together their own contribution to the theological exposition, and he will have to marvel at the small quantity of the residuum. Accordingly, the attempt has been made here to withhold from the reader as much as possible all these preliminaries, giving instead as succinctly as may be their results. Attention has been paid to the *varietas lectionum* only so far as they have any bearing on the meaning of the passage, and the same course has been adopted as to the philological groundwork. The history of the exposition has been left out altogether, and all controversy with predecessors has been systematically avoided.

The aim has been rather to unfold, with the New Testament only in hand, the order and the substance of the thought in St. John's Epistle. Not indeed with the foregone conclusion that historical-critical commentary is superfluous; for it is, in fact, the first work that every one must toil at who seeks to penetrate independently into the meaning of any book in the New Testament. But it seemed to me more convenient to present the reader at once with a uniform exposition, which would not leave him under the necessity of passing under review all possible varieties of exposition, and thus, instead of being occupied with one interpretation of the Epistle, striving to come to an understanding with a good many of them. Thus there is a gain of space and time which may be devoted uninterruptedly to the investigation of its theo-

logical principles, and, according to the ability given, to sink into their depths. The purpose has been ever before my mind to study every detail as far as possible in such a way that the reader may be aware always of its place in the great whole; for so long as the particulars are viewed only as particulars, the apprehension of their meaning even as particulars becomes onesided and disjointed. Thus the way in which I arrange the order and matter of thought in the Epistle determines, under this aspect, the substance of the whole book.

Under this aspect—for it may be supposed to furnish something independently of this—it professes to be a contribution to Biblical Theology. This, in my view, has for its object more than the systematic arrangement of the fortuitous or intentional utterances of a New Testament author on all possible dogmatic points, and the gathering them into one whole: more than this may be expected, so far as it aims to be scientific. Almost all the dogmatic disquisitions of the New Testament are in a certain sense occasional utterances. For instance, when our Epistle calls God Light, this definition is not primarily given in the interest of theological metaphysical speculation, but only to lay the basis for the exhortation to walk in the light. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that the definition Θεὸς φῶς was, quite apart from the relation in which it here stands, a constituent element of Johannaean thinking; and that, generally speaking, whatever St. John says throughout the Epistle with a practical aim was not only living in his spirit in this its ethical connection, but also drawn from the whole fulness of his Christian moral philosophy. Every man who truly thinks bears in himself, albeit perhaps unconsciously, his own system of thought; all his individual and apparently isolated utterances spring from the totality of his view of things. In common life we are justified from the individual words of a man (more than that we really

know in but few) to draw our conclusions as to his collective habit of thought. He must consent to accept the premises and conclusions which lie wrapped up in his words; otherwise he would have no claim to be considered at all. How much more are we justified, in the case of apostles whom the Holy Ghost led into all truth, to conclude from their occasional utterances to the whole spirit of their view and system of thought! To do this—to place, as it were, every word of their mouth under the microscope, to investigate dialectically on what presuppositions it is based and to what conclusions it leads—is the problem of Biblical Theology.

It is not intended to signify, that whatever we may thus find must have been actually present to the consciousness of the apostles; probably much of it was never made by them the express object of their thinking. All that is meant is, that *if* they had directed their thought upon it, they must have come to a system thus and thus constructed; and that thus we arrive at the view of God and the universe which lay at the basis of all their individual utterances, although in many cases unconsciously to themselves. When we contemplate a work of human genius,—such, for example, as Goethe's *Faust*,—we think ourselves warranted to watch for many beauties, and to seek them there, although we do not always suppose that they came actually as such to the poet's own consciousness. We may appeal to the old maxim, that the poet is a seer who says more than he himself knows. And the holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, are they to be supposed to have said nothing beyond what they at the moment were clearly and intelligently conscious of? Must we hesitate to leave them with the responsibility of all consequences and promises which, by dialectical necessity, flow from these words?

For such an edifice of Biblical Theology, thus hastily

sketched or hinted at, I have essayed to contribute a single stone, my labour having been to pursue the utterances of the apostle at salient passages into all their consequences. With what result it is not for me to say. The spirit of the Apostle John is an imposing spirit; and one feels himself almost oppressed by the majesty of the thoughts of this Epistle, which are like heavenly music in the reader's ears. If here and there one soul should be moved, by the ministry of my book, to cast himself with all his might into this sea of the riches of divine wisdom and knowledge, my labour will have attained its end.

Often had I with pleasure anticipated the moment when I should submit these sheets to the Director of this Gymnasium, Dr. Robert Geier, under whose guidance I studied during the years which were engrossed with this work, and whose signal goodwill I reckon as one of the treasures of my life. But it was not to be: he was during the interval summoned from this world. Let his name, however, at least be named here as a token of the piety and love which link me with him beyond the grave. *Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε ἐκπίπτει.*

TREPTOW ON THE RHINE.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE translator has been requested to say a few words with respect to the book which is now, after some delay, presented to the English public. The first thing expected of him is naturally some account of the author; but this curiosity it is not in his power to gratify. The work was published some years ago by a writer who has not since made his appearance in literature. It was received with much favour, and generally regarded as a specimen of exegesis at once original and orthodox; in fact, it took its place immediately among the best contributions to a literature, already very rich, devoted to the exposition of St. John's writings. Perhaps the best introduction to these remarks will be some extracts from early criticisms in the German theological press, especially as those criticisms are bound up with the first issue of the original. Zimmermann's *Theologische Literaturblatt* thus speaks in a free translation:—

"The present work may be classed among the most useful and interesting that have lately appeared in Biblical-exegetical literature. It exhibits scientific profoundness and practical application in harmonious union: united in such a way as few books unite them. It is a pleasant thing in these days, when the storms of party contest disturb the Church, when the opponents and the friends of revelation are pitched against each other in open and violent warfare, when Supernaturalism and Nihilism contend everywhere and in all confessions for the mastery,—to fall in with books whose authors have evidently, in quiet and earnest toil, been pondering the precious word of God, and extracting from the hidden depths of Scripture its pure gold. Such a gift this author presents us; and, in the

name of all who love the Bible, but especially in the name of our ministerial brethren, whom this expositor has mainly had in view, we heartily thank him. He has done much by his own fundamental investigations to advance the knowledge of this Epistle; and he has also offered an important contribution towards the yet future exploration of its depths. In a way not hitherto trodden, and with a success not hitherto attained, he shows the subtle connection of thought in its general scope; and thus by his clear and luminous analysis refutes the objection sometimes urged against the Epistle as being without any method. He, in fact, shows that the most beautiful order reigns in it. And he further admits us into the secret mystery of St. John's habit of thought and view of things generally; so that by his aid we can understand the spiritual life of the evangelist in its entire unity and harmony, and even penetrate into the inmost movements and feelings of his apostolic heart inflamed and governed by perfect love.

"He rightly observes that it is the province of Biblical Theology, to which he offers this contribution, to place, as it were, every word under a microscope, and examine in a dialectical way from what presuppositions it springs, to what consequences it leads; in short, to deduce from incidental expressions what the general system of thought was, and conversely to pour upon individual expressions light derived from the spirit of the Christian philosophy of the whole. With this aim the author has examined the Johannaean ideas *ζωὴ αἰώνιος, φῶς, χρίσμα, δικαιοσύνη, ἀλήθεια, ἀγάπη, ἀνομία,* and illustrated their meaning with such a profusion of learning and skill as must be studied to be adequately appreciated.

"We have particularly to remark upon one thing, that the author has avoided a snare into which, as far as our observation goes, all expositors have more or less fallen: the superabundant citation and refutation of other exegetes. To such an extent is this carried, even in de Wette and Meyer, and in the excellent Bible of Lange, that often the expositor forgets to establish and clear up his own views. We see no reason why this practice should be indulged in,

at the expense of the compendiousness of the work and the concentration of the mind on its own teaching. It holds good here also that *nimium nocet.* This danger our expositor has happily avoided; although he has, as the whole book plainly shows, thoroughly examined and tested the opinions of others, and his own exposition is the product and rich fruit of that conscientious study. Moreover, the arrangement of the work is very suggestive. Each independent section of the Epistle has its explanation of word and matter and sense; this is followed by a *resumé* of the meaning of the whole section as such, with which is connected a glance backward at each leading division of the Epistle, followed by a development of its entire current of thought, as also by an examination of the occasion and purport and aim of the letter, with a final review of its theological character. And all this is done in a spirited, penetrating, and attractive style.

"After these general observations we count it our duty, and an obligation of gratitude, to examine a few points in detail. As already mentioned, it was the steady purpose of the writer to illustrate the fundamental ideas and sharply define the leading principles of the whole Epistle, which bears a specifically Christological character. Around these unique ideas the excellent exposition is ordered, in which the author has succeeded in developing the deep thought of the Johannaean theology in a clear and perspicuous manner, and in contributing much valuable help towards understanding the obscure and difficult parts of the Epistle. For instance, we perfectly agree with him in the explanation of the first four verses of the first chapter, which are very frequently misunderstood: his exhibition of the argument is clear and unforced; and the personal meaning of the Λόγος in ver. 1, as he supports it, appears to commend itself most absolutely to acceptance. His view of the connection between this and the subsequent υἱός is highly suggestive; and so is the development of the idea in φῶς, which he rightly denies to be a particular quality in God, and asserts to be the primal ground of His essence which is such as manifests itself to itself. The interpretation of

ch. i. 7 is rather unusual: the author makes *καθαρίζειν* refer to sanctification, and shows, with keen and convincing force, the internal connection between ver. 8 and the closing words of ver. 7.

"The second chapter presents a knot to expositors in vers. 12–14, not only as to the meaning of the sixfold address, but also as to the place of the paragraph in the organic whole of the letter. Our author is successful in diffusing light in both directions. He shows that the aim of the exhortation is not to set forth generally the doctrines of Christianity, but to bring the Christian disciples to a higher perfection. Not less admirable is the profound way in which all Scripture is made to illustrate the principle laid down by St. John. He rightly takes the *καί* in ver. 20, not adversatively, but as expressing simple progression. This gives precision and clearness to the context, and makes the connection with the preceding passage luminous at once. 'Ye who are able through your anointing to discern with sufficient clearness the anti-Christian error, will also now take care to avoid it, and hold fast the truth.' He correctly interprets the *χρίσμα* of anointing as the symbol of the impartation of the Spirit, and refers the *ἅγιος* not to the Father, but to the Son.

"Concerning the exposition of the passages, ch. iv. 17–19 and ch. v. 6–8, which present so many difficulties, we need say no more than that our expositor has been able to illustrate every point in its relation to St. John's general habit of thought. On the other hand, we cannot altogether accord with his remarks upon ch. v. 16, 17. Our own view is that the apostle here describes by another name the sin which the Saviour termed a sin against the Holy Ghost, and does no more than declare the uselessness of prayer for such a sin. For the rest, the elucidation of the details is here also, as everywhere, both striking and instructive.

"We can therefore heartily and with perfect confidence recommend this work, which in fact presents to the working minister specifically a rich fund of help for his study, continually keeping, as it does, the scientific and the practical equally in view. For such labour as this we would have

as many sympathizers and helpers as possible. We are deeply convinced that he who penetrates the spirit of this book, and ponders, with our author's help, the sublime and majestic divine ideas of the Epistle, will lay down the work enriched in knowledge and comforted in his inner man. Nor will he fail to wish that the New Testament were handled in this fashion by many more among the learned."

The student—for he who appreciates our volume must be a student—will find that this testimony is true. He will perceive that, while St. John's inspiration and the canonical authority of his letter are left uninvestigated, every word, and every turn of thought in every sentence, is examined with most reverent care, and viewed in the light of the analogy of his own other writings, and in that of the other Scriptures. It will be found to yield a great advantage—as the reviewer points out—that we have to do with the opinions and decisions of one mind, and are not required to watch how he holds the balances in which a thousand conflicting interpretations lie. It is a book that encourages the reader's private judgment; while sufficiently dogmatic, and occasionally almost dictatorial, it commends itself to every man's thoughtful discrimination. Though a certain Platonic philosophy and the theology of Lutheranism underlie the exposition, these are not unduly obtruded. The reader and his guide are together in the presence of St. John as an independent witness of the truth of God. The translator in this case not being an editor also, it would be out of place to point out what he may deem flaws in the exegesis. Were it right to do so, he could indicate several results of elaborate exegetical criticism from which he dissents; among them would be two that the reviewer above highly approves,—connected with the *καθαρίζειν* and the *φῶς*,—the determination of the vexed question as to the residue of necessary sin in the believer, and the terms used in the definition of regeneration, and as to the operation of perfecting and perfected charity in the hearts of the sanctified. It would be a labour of love to discuss these points here or anywhere; but it must suffice that the translator clears

himself from the responsibility of some few of the conclusions of his author. For the rest, there is nothing in the volume that is not true to the Catholic faith; even in the questions alluded to, our expositor—it must be honestly confessed—has on his side the great majority. But let that pass.

A word may be said here as to the studied exclusion of the polemics of exegesis. It is quite possible, while admiring this specimen of direct in opposition to indirect interpretation, that we may do injustice to those invaluable works which adopt a different plan. It is undoubtedly sometimes a very troublesome thing to get at the meaning of Meyer or Huther themselves through the wearisome array of contradicted authors who bar the way. But, generally speaking, the toil is in the long run rewarded. We see, as we otherwise should not, all that has been or may be said on the subject; we are saved the trouble of consulting a multitude of writers; and meanwhile we have the pleasure of exercising our own critical faculty upon a variety of opinions,—a pleasure which to many is one of a very exquisite kind. It is hardly fair, moreover, that an author who could never have produced a book like this had he not carefully read the other kind of commentaries should even seem to disparage them. He could not have used his own microscope with such wonderful effect had he not been in the habit of looking through a multitude of other men's less finished instruments. And his honest desire to advance the truth would be thought by himself to have failed of its reward if he did not find his own conclusions discussed in commentaries yet to come. We have noticed evidences already—and if we had not noticed them, may be sure of their being found—that Haupt's interpretations will play a conspicuous part in the labours of future Meyers and Huthers, who will point out where his microscope has seen more than it should have seen, or has failed to see what ought to be seen. After all, this matter of bristling polemics on the page of calm exegesis is one merely of degree. It is carried to a great and wearisome excess, but it cannot be altogether avoided.

Another reviewer in the *Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung* brings out a feature of the book not yet touched upon:—

"The present work occupies a place as it were between a commentary and a biblical-theological essay. It is distingished from the former, inasmuch as grammatical-historical exegesis is not the writer's chief aim, but is regarded only as the foundation already laid, which, however, is introduced more or less according to the necessity of the case. His eye is always fixed on the process of thought; all else is subordinate to this supreme object. On the other hand, it is distinguished from those works which deal with the Epistle only as illustrating Johannaean theology; for it does not select and discuss isolated passages, but impartially investigates every thought from beginning to end. The expositor aims to develope from it the general principles of St. John's views of God and the universe; for, although the apostle may not have been conscious that he was exhibiting such a system, all the elements of it were enfolded in his thinking. Hence, as Haupt himself says, he has placed every expression under a microscope, and traced it back to its premisses, and forward to its conclusions; thus finding its exact relation to the apostle's scheme of thought generally. He has taken special pains with the order of the ideas in the Epistle; this having always been, and still being, matter of great difficulty to exegetes. He thinks that he has found a specific, compact, and regularly ordered process of thought, without, however, believing that the apostle wrote on a preconceived harmonious plan. Throughout the exposition we trace a decidedly realistic feature; as also a dialectic, sometimes even too keen, which with great subtilty seeks to do justice to every word of the Bible."

The question of any analytical arrangement of this Epistle has been a fruitful source of discussion among expositors. Taking it altogether, that which is established in the present volume is, perhaps, the most elaborate that has ever been attempted. How elaborate it is the reader will hardly be aware until he reaches the summing up at the close. He will then perceive that he has been examin-

ing the most exquisite piece of reticulation imaginable. If he should attempt—what the author has not attempted—to write out the Greek, which is everything here, on the principle of this analysis, he will be simply amazed at the result. Two things will strike him most forcibly. First, that men with any pretension to common sense could ever have come to the conclusion that the Epistle, as the production of St. John's old age,—this undoubtedly it was,—betrays all the marks of senility, being an unmethodized effusion of pious sentiments and reflections. This view has been put in a more respectful form, in the assertion that the apostle was a contemplative and not a dialectical spirit, and that he poured out the aphorisms or detached expressions of his pure meditation on the profound truths of the Gospel. We cannot travel through the first chapter, under our author's guidance, without feeling that, at any rate, such a fallacy as this must be exploded. Intuition and deductive thought meet here as they never met before, and have perhaps never met since, save in some of the meditations of St. Augustine. The second matter of astonishment will be, that a writer whose mind never for a moment loses the thread or the clue of his own analysis should have adopted his method unconsciously, as our author seems to assert that he did. And this may beget some suspicion of the analysis itself: suspicion which, it may be observed, a careful examination will justify. But into this question the present notice cannot enter. Suffice to say that, saving in a few cases where the despotism of analysis leads to a certain violence being done to the text, even a faulty scheme, thoroughly worked out, very much aids the interpretation of the whole. None can read Bengel's exposition of the Epistle without feeling this. It is remarkable that no two expositors are in agreement here. Every man has his own interpretation. It would be wrong here to yield to the temptation of adding another.

Before delivering up the book to its readers, a few concluding sentences may be permitted on the general characteristics of the Epistle, and the spirit in which it should be studied.

Our expositor again and again remarks that St. John's letter bears all the marks of having been written to congregations already in possession of the truth. This hardly goes far enough to do justice to the case. It was written designedly as the supplement to all extant New Testament Scripture, as, in fact, the final treatise of inspired revelation. This is not avowed, or, if avowed, the expression of it is very faint and indirect. But the effect of this truth is everywhere apparent. Every doctrine, from that of God, as manifested in the Mediatorial Trinity, through the atonement down to the last things, receives its consummating form. The evangelist was reserved to "seal up the vision" and close the long series of divine communications to man. The commandment to "write," which was first given to Moses, and is not often heard afterwards, is emphatically given at the close to St. John, who finishes what Moses began. He is the last writer of the New Testament, and it is highly probable that his Catholic Epistle was his last service to Christianity. It is his only doctrinal work, for in neither the Gospel nor the Revelation does he speak in his own person as a teacher. In the latter, he is only the amanuensis of the Lord's Apocalypse, and the recorder of the visions which he beheld "in the Spirit;" where he speaks in his own person, it is only to narrate his rapture or the historical event connected with his vocation to write. The prologue of the Gospel seems to be an exception; but that is not so much his own teaching as the necessary introduction of the person of his Lord. In this Epistle we receive the closing doctrinal testimony of the last and greatest teacher of the Christian Church; and in it we have, therefore, the final and finishing touches of the whole system of evangelical truth. As the fourth evangelist undeniably had the three synoptical Gospels before him, so the last apostle had the apostolical Epistles before him, and gave them also their finish and perfection. Remembering how long an interval separates this document from all other purely doctrinal treatises, it will not be too much to say that St. John devotes the last breath, as it were, of infallible inspiration to a general review of the whole sum of truth, and sets on

it his final seal. Not that the letter is a general doctrinal summary. It is, like almost all the other treatises of revelation, an occasional document: a protest against many kinds of Gnostic heresy, especially concerning the Person of Christ and its relation to the redeeming economy. As such it keeps its eye steadily on the ultimate forms which fleeting errors were beginning to assume, and almost defines the terms of these false theories. It is undoubtedly a contribution of St. John to the pressing needs of the universal Church; a Catholic defence against uncatholic false doctrine. We hear again the voice of the "son of thunder," still vehement against every insult to the majesty of his Lord. It is not therefore a general compendium of theology. But we may say that it traverses, more than any other treatise, the whole field; in other words, that it would, better than any other fragment of the New Testament, supply the place of the entire final revelation to such as might possess it alone.

It is evident that St. John speaks generally as the representative of the company of his predecessors; the opening of the Epistle introduces the "we," not of personal authority, but of the apostolic brotherhood. His is the last voice, soon to be silent like the others; and the tone of the whole letter is that of recapitulation and bringing to remembrance. Not a solitary instance is there of a new assertion; all is written under the law of its own maxim, "I write no new commandment unto you." There is not from beginning to end a truth which adds to the old stock, as is so often the case in the earlier writings. Yet the form of all is new. The ever fresh and never exhausted Spirit of inspiration leaves the Church in this Epistle with the token that there is no limit to the power of exhibiting fresh combinations of truth. As St. Paul's last letters are still full of new forms and turns of expression, so it is with St. John, and especially in this last fragment of Scripture. But every novelty of expression is in perfect harmony with the other types of doctrine, on which it sets the seal of perfection. This double truth—that St. John retains every other element of evangelical truth while giving a final touch to

every other—is of the utmost possible importance to the expositor of this Epistle.

Let it be remembered, for instance, in every passage that introduces the three several Persons of the Holy Trinity, and it will be seen that some delicate points emerge which have no strict parallel elsewhere. Not to speak of the Three Heavenly Witnesses—our author, in common with most recent criticism, rejects this—reference may be made to the passage that closes the Epistle, and therefore in a sense the whole Bible. "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." Here God and the Father are one in His Son. With this let ch. iv. 9, 14 be collated: "GOD sent His only-begotten Son into the world," which in a remarkable variation becomes, "the Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world." Hence, in a manner more express than anywhere else, it is asserted that the Father is the Head and Representative of the Godhead: in other words, God and the Father are one. Of course, this is the doctrine of the entire New Testament; but it has here its final and full expression. Again, with regard to the Person of Christ, we find the same note of a final recension of doctrine. What elsewhere is said concerning the Son as having "life in Himself," might be and has been referred to the incarnate Son the life of men; but here "the Word of life is with the Father," an expression that retires behind all temporal relations. And the Son is here more emphatically than anywhere else "that Son of Him the Only-begotten" who, as such, was "sent into the world." And, with respect to the incarnation itself, the basis and presupposition of all other doctrine, our Epistle has the final and unsurpassable formulae, almost all of them peculiar, though each of them linking itself with something that had been said before: formulae, namely, such as "was manifested," "came in the flesh," "sent into the world," which will be found to contain, when studied in their connection, some slight but very specific variation from all preceding phrases, and improvement upon them. The emphasis is here at the close upon the truth that not God absolutely, but the Son

came in flesh, and that this Son is still Jesus Christ who came: the reader must mark for himself by collation the advance in such phrases as these found in the Epistle. They are unique, and chosen in order to serve the double purpose of rebuking the Gnostic antichrists, who refused to believe that the Son of God took more than the semblance of a human existence, and that also of making it for ever plain that there was no conversion of the divine into the human when "the Word became flesh." The Epistle ends with a declaration, so clear as to leave all doubt behind, that the entire manifestation of Jesus Christ is that of the personal Son, whose divine and eternal personality governs the development of His person and work. Here is a final and definitive and consummate word, "the Son of God is come:" there is but One Person of whom all is said, by whom all was done upon earth, and who is accomplishing all that remains to be done in heaven. The distinctions of later theology between a divine and a human personality in our Lord were unknown to St. John, who speaks for all the apostles, and for the Lord Himself. They know of no human personality as such and as apart from the divine. They do not say that He became a man, but that He became flesh, or came in the flesh: flesh being the realistic compendium of human nature or human existence. There is a remarkable reading of ch. iv. 3, which Haupt admirably defends, implying that St. John seemed to condemn the sundering or dissolving of Jesus into a God and man: "every spirit ὃ λύει." There is something deeply suggestive in this variation of the text. However much one might hesitate before its authentication, when once it is authenticated no one can doubt that it must be classed among that large number of presentient or anticipative texts of Scripture the meaning and application of which the set time should declare. Be that as it may, this Epistle does, in the most subtle and exquisite way, exhibit the very perfection of the doctrine of the two natures in one personality which make up the true doctrine of the Person of Christ. It removes the angularity and roughness from all other passages, obviates the possible misconception to which

they were liable, and, in short, crowns them all, as has been said again and again, with the finishing touch of perfection.

The same principle might be applied to the doctrine of sin in this Epistle, which is brought into relation with Satan in a manner quite peculiar to itself, though in strict harmony with other passages in the Gospel and the later Epistles of St. Paul. The original sinner himself is brought out into very distinct prominence: never, indeed, is he so sharply defined in his personality and in his relation to the redeeming work as in the last pages of Scripture. But more important than this is the effect of the finishing hand upon the work and mediatorial ministry of Christ. Let the reader carefully mark the specific aspect in which the atonement is seen in four or five distinct presentations of it, and his own reflection will suggest all that might be said. The Father sent the Son AS the Saviour rather than TO BE the Saviour of the world. He sent His Only-begotten Son as the propitiation for our sins. This term in the Epistle, ἱλασμός, is invested with deep interest as St. John's unique expression, reserved as it were for the close of the Scripture, just as is the revelation that "God is love." Jesus is Himself the propitiation once in heaven and once on earth: Himself, which is the same as St. Paul's "propitiatory in His blood through faith," but also very much more than that. The term Mediator is not used; but what the term means is exhibited more clearly than anywhere else. It is the Pauline "Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" somewhat improved upon, if such language may be used. The Mediator IS God and man, and not only BETWEEN God and men. Everywhere the mission is of the only-begotten Son, not to win for man the love of God by appeasing first His holy wrath, but as the Messenger of a love which had already provided the propitiation that eternal holiness rendered nccessary and justice found sufficient. It must be remembered that the wonderful revelations of the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians and the Hebrews were before St. John when he so carefully blended love and propitiation together, giving love the pre-eminence. But it is hardly possible to doubt that his full

and complete doctrine of the atonement is, and is intended to be, the complement and perfection of all former testimonies.

The same may be said of the application of the atonement to the individual, with all the blessings of the Christian covenant as imparted to faith. The same three leading ideas of righteousness, sonship, and sanctification which run through the whole New Testament pervade this Epistle also, though the terminology undergoes a slight variation here and there. We miss many of St. Paul's phrases, and many of these found in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but we do not miss what these terms signify. And it may be said with confidence that in this last document of revelation these three several families of blessing are combined and interwoven with each other in a manner of which there is no example elsewhere. The verification of this would be a good preliminary discipline for the study of our Epistle.

With regard to the first term, we certainly find nothing here answerable to the Pauline "righteousness of God," "righteousness of faith," Christ "made unto us righteousness." But we have, corresponding to each of these terms respectively, phrases which suggest the same meaning to ears already prepared for them. St. John, however, taking for granted St. Paul's earlier fundamental teaching, enters into the spirit of his later defence of the doctrine against antinomian perversion: he lays stress upon the link between imputed and inherent conformity with law. Supposing this Epistle to be the final expression of the evangelical doctrine of the new righteousness of faith, how striking is the play upon the words: "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous"! On any other supposition they seem nothing but a play on the words; and, in fact, have been set by more than one shallow and irreverent expositor to the account of our apostle's senility.

In harmony with the principle thus laid down, the connection between righteousness as before the law and the filial relation to God in Christ is set forth in its final and consummate form. The Epistle does not distinguish between the mediatorial court, in which law, with its forensic phraseology, presides, and the household or family of God

wherein all belongs to the adoption of sons. St. Paul does in general keep these apart. St. John unites them in these words, which form the transition from the one great term to the other: "Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." He makes more emphatic than ever, as if by a final testimony, the pre-eminent dignity of the estate of sonship. It had been said that believers were "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son:" thus making their sonship the only privilege spoken of in such high terms. The second part of our Epistle is a wonderful expansion of this very theme, with the terms changed and a finishing touch laid on the whole. The old word adoption is no longer used; but the reality of its meaning, and its close connection with the new birth itself, are again and again expressed in the apostle's words. As if the whole design of God's love in the Gospel was summed up in this, he cries,—in the centre of the Epistle and in its unique apostrophe,—"Behold what and how great love God hath given to us, in order that we may be called, and we are, the children of God!" But the very highest expression of this dignity is, that it springs from union with the First-born and the Only-begotten. St. Paul gives many hints of this; but his hints are in our Epistle perfect developments. Passing over many passages which illustrate the high reach of its doctrine, it is enough to say that only of our sonship in Christ and the more abundant life it imparts is "eternal" used: it is not eternal righteousness, nor eternal sanctification, but eternal life. Whatever has been said before is now more greatly said: "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." More glorious things are spoken of the estate of regeneration than had ever before been spoken. This gives the Christians at last their name: not any longer "the righteous," or "the saints," but "children," "little children," "brethren," "the sons of God." This, however, is comparatively a small thing. The actual birth "of God," of "His seed," defines regeneration by stronger terms, if possible, than had been used before; the privileges of the new birth have here their highest

ideal description, so high indeed as to be the despair of commentators. In fact, this final treatise makes the supreme glory of the Christian vocation to be, that the sons of God in Christ are like the Son as He now is and as He will appear hereafter: like Him in the sense both of ὁμοίοι and of ὁμοουσίοι; or, to borrow a word of St. Paul, which for once St. John has not surpassed, "one Spirit with Him."

The third branch or development of privilege in the Christian covenant is everywhere in the New Testament the sanctification of the soul, pardoned and regenerate, to God: not, however, as if the sanctification follows on forgiveness and the new birth; rather it is concurrent with them. Strictly speaking, there is but one great substantial blessing, life in Christ; the other two are the necessary concomitants or conditions or appendages of this. The relation thus indicated is impressed most emphatically by St. John as the final lesson of the New Testament. We are forgiven in order that we be "called sons;" we are sanctified in order that we may worthily "be sons." The new life is in the mediatorial court, where law reigns, cleared from condemnation, and enabled to fulfil all righteousness; it is itself imparted in fellowship with the Son, "the First-born among many brethren," in the Father's house; and it is in the new temple of Christianity, over which Jesus presides as High Priest, consecrated and sanctified. The development of this last idea bears the same marks of finality and consummation which have been observed in the two others. A certain change has passed over the terminology; but the change is—*sit venia verbo*—on the side of simplicity and strength. For the purification from sin only two are retained out of a large number, καθαρίζειν and ἁγνίζειν. The former is used twice at the threshold of the Epistle, and in each case with a unique application: "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin," from all sin which the light reveals as spot and defilement; and presently afterwards the virtue of the atonement is said to be administered by God, "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness:" that is, blending the court and the temple in a way hitherto

unusual, to forgive the sin in the one, and to cleanse from the guilt of unrighteousness in the other. Here, at the outset, we have the divine application of the atonement to those who confess that they have been, that they are, and that they will be to eternity sinners, depending on the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ for admission to eternal life. In the heart of the Epistle the other term comes in, and St. John appropriates it to the human co-operation. Both St. Paul and St. James apply the former term, *καθαρίζειν*, to man's own act; St. John only uses *ἁγνίζειν* for this. He says all that St. Paul meant when he exhorts us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" but, as his manner is, he varies and, if possible, elevates the argument: "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." But hitherto all has been in some sense negative, the cleansing the nature from sin. The positive element of entire consecration to God comes before us in the form of the perfected work of the love of God in us: St. John's final contribution to the subject. The passages which unfold this high doctrine have no parallel in Scripture, though they are jointly and severally the exact expression, in its highest form, of the spirit of the entire New Testament. This is not the place to expound them fully. But let the reader of our present volume, and of most other commentaries on this Epistle, ask himself as he reads whether justice is done to them. He should be exceedingly jealous upon this point, and not suffer his mind to be beclouded in the interpretation of this last and highest testimony to the prerogatives of the Christian life of holiness.

The passages here referred to—those which speak of the perfected love of God in man—are distributed over the Epistle in a very suggestive manner, illustrating what has been said as to the final tone here impressed upon the evangelical phraseology. Their first occurrence connects them with the observance of the law or righteousness: "whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." Here there is a beautiful inversion of St. Paul's

order, "love is the fulfilling of the law:" for in St. John the fulfilling of the law is also the perfecting of love. The second instance of their use connects them with the regenerate life. Writing to those who are born of God, St. John says: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." At this point rises in the text the word which revelation had never uttered before, "God is love," and the love of God, dwelling in those who are born of Him, has in and through their charity to man its perfect operation. The third time they are connected with our sanctification from all sin, through the indwelling of God by His Spirit in the soul. St. Paul speaks of the "love of God shed abroad" in the believer. This is a large word, but here it is surpassed: "love with us is perfected," it becomes "perfect love" in us, which drives out fear because it drives out sin, the cause of fear, gives boldness in the judgment whether present or future, and is the entire consecration of the soul in the indwelling Trinity. These are only suggestions, offered only to illustrate a principle that furnishes one key of great importance to the exposition of this Epistle. It sets the seal of perfection on all former doctrine concerning the privileges of the Christian estate.

The entire vocabulary sanctified in the New Testament to describe these privileges falls into three classes, as we have seen: one large class revolves around the word righteousness; another around the life of sonship; and a third, brought up from the temple, is composed entirely of sacrificial terms. These various departments of phraseology are everywhere distinct, though sometimes they seem to be blended. We see at once which predominates in the several Epistles of St. Paul and the Hebrews, and in the other writings of the New Testament. But when we come to this last document or compendium, they are intertwined and made one after a new fashion. This can be verified in every paragraph. One instance may suffice. Let the reader begin with ch. ii. 29, and go on to ch. iii. 5, with this thought in his mind. He finds the three ideas of conformity to law or righteousness, perfection of the filial life in the image of the Son, and sanctification from all sin,

distinct and yet blended inextricably. The order is there, righteousness, sonship, sanctification; but the three are one. The terms of the court, the household and the temple, confirm and illustrate each other; and Jesus Christ—the Righteous, the Son of the Father, the Holy One—presides, in the glory of His holiness, over all and over each.

The principle here laid down may be perverted in its application. It may be said that this final testimony of revelation has left behind and rendered obsolete much of St. Paul's forensic and judicial thought, and sublimated the Gospel into its higher and more simple character. But this is a mistake. This Epistle perfects all, but not by suppressing anything. For instance, there is no aspect of the atonement—as in the divine nature first, and then revealed at the cross—which may not be discovered by the faithful eye in this Epistle. Christ is the messenger of eternal love, but He bears a propitiatory sacrifice sent forth from eternity, and as the Righteous One He vindicates the rectoral righteousness of God in His advocacy for sinners. St. Paul has dilated on these three points more fully; but no terms of his surpass the force of the last apostle. The entire doctrine of the righteousness of faith is wrapped up in one expression: "Your sins are forgiven for His name's sake." St. Paul's: "just God and the Justifier," is reproduced in St. John's "faithful and just to forgive us our sins." St. John's vindication of the necessity of interior righteousness is only the echo of St. Paul's own; and in his pages St. James and St. Paul are harmonized better than anywhere else. Again, it may be insinuated that the absence of the ideas of Church, and sacraments, and ministry, indicate a certain disparagement of these ideas. Certainly the spirituality of the true Christian fellowship is exalted to the highest point; but the visible organization is implied in the condemnation of those "who went out from us," and the little Epistle to Gaius, written by the same hand, and about the same time, settles the place "the Church" and its ministry held in the apostle's system. As to the sacraments, they are not alluded to, save in a mystical way, because there is no reason to think that the sacramental

doctrine had been perverted in St. John's time. But here comes in another principle or key of interpretation,—that the great errors of the time were assailed in this final document,—and this has not been dwelt upon here, because it is abundantly illustrated in the volume now introduced.

It only remains to commend the reverential and devout spirit that pervades this exposition. The writer evidently knows that secret of the "unction from the Holy One" which he has so beautifully expounded, and the reader must know it too, if he would not lose his labour.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

NO author in the New Testament canon has to the same extent as the Apostle John impressed upon the very introductory words of his writings a Christological stamp. The Epistles of St. Paul refer the χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη, which they invoke upon the readers, equally to the Father and to the Son. The first Epistle of St. Peter introduces at once in its superscription the three divine persons co-ordinately; and his second Epistle, while it first speaks of Christ as Θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρ, yet ascribes the proper salutation equally to the Father and to the Son. But, even apart from the introductory words, these documents—to which we may indeed add the synoptical Gospels themselves—do not produce the sublime Christological impression that is produced by the works of St. John. This stamp is all the more remarkable inasmuch as the first Epistle, and still more the Apocalypse,[1] when they are examined in detail, contain but little doctrine proper concerning the God-man. The Epistle to the Colossians, for example, is much richer in this respect than both the works just mentioned. But with such full energy does St. John at the outset make the Son of God the sole centre of all his thinking, that in our

[1] The author may observe here, once for all, that he gives due appreciation to the great difficulties which oppose the hypothesis that the writer of the Apocalypse was the writer of the Gospel. But they fail to sway him, nevertheless, especially as they contradict the strong witness of antiquity; and he therefore always quotes the Apocalypse as Johannaean. By a more and more diligent and thorough comparison of its matter with that of the Gospel and of the Epistle, the conviction on the one side or the other must necessarily in due time be brought clearly out.

investigations of the most remote subjects that follow we feel ourselves always under the supremacy of this central truth. *Χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γεγόνεν*: these words, taken in their widest significance, constitute the signature of the Johannaean writings.

However strikingly the opening words of the Gospel and our Epistle respectively accord as to their scope and matter, they have important differences in their form. The Gospel begins in short, antithetical sentences, as to their construction and bearing easily intelligible; the Epistle begins with a long period, abruptly breaking off and then returning back to its starting-point, such as furnishes some difficulties to the grammatical interpretation. This Epistle also has no superscription; while the second and third of the same writer each contains one, the second in a form approximating to the copiousness of the Pauline formula; the third, in the briefest way possible, only mentioning the sender and the receiver. It is true that an attempt has been made to force the first four verses of our Epistle into the scheme of a superscription; the *χαρά* of the fourth verse has been made analogous to the *χάρις* of the Pauline Epistles; the *πληρωθῆναι* of the joy here has been paralleled with the *πληθυνθῆναι* of the inscriptions in St. Peter, Polycarp, and Clemens. But if we find evidence that the first four verses aim only to give the matter and scope of the letter, this of itself proves that they furnish us, not with a superscription proper, but with a specific introduction. In the superscription of an epistle the names of the receiver and of the sender could not well be wanting. We have something like such a letter without superscription in the Epistle to the Hebrews, only that there the close at least corresponds with the customary closing formula of St. Paul's letters. Still, in the main current of our present document the reader remains much more conscious of the epistolary form than in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is much more like a treatise.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1.

Ὃ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἑωράκαμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα, καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς.

As to the construction of the first verses of this Epistle, modern exegesis has come to a pretty clear agreement. The period contains a double specification of the object; first, it is given in the relative clauses with *ὅ*; and then, secondly, it is summed up in the words: *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς*. The predicate to which all these definitions of the object belong is *ἀπαγγέλλομεν* in ver. 3. But before this is announced the apostle inserts a parenthesis for the closer explanation of the *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* (ver. 2); and then the broken thread is taken up again by a brief repetition of the object (*ὃ ἑωράκαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν*). But when the form is settled, the matter yet remains for interpretation. What is the substance of the announcement which St. John has to make? Is it a thing? In favour of this seems the neutral beginning, the fourfold *ὅ*. Or is it a person? For this speaks the matter of these same neutral clauses: *ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν κ.τ.λ.*; for this also the allusion to the beginning of the Gospel, where in part the same is said concerning the Logos; for this, finally, the summarizing expression: *λόγος τῆς ζωῆς*. It is certainly inadmissible to translate these words as meaning the annunciation or message concerning life; for St. John's aim is not to speak *about* the preaching of the apostles, but to announce that preaching itself. We can understand *περὶ τῆς ζωῆς ἀπαγγέλλομεν*; but *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* would be, on such a theory of interpretation, an embarrassing thought. The undeniable coinci-

dence between the beginning of the Epistle and the prologue of the Gospel requires that we take the λόγος here in the same sense as there,—that is, as the description of the Son of God, the eternal Revealer of the divinity.

All the expressions of the verse showing that it is a person who is in the apostle's view, how comes it that he begins with the neuter? We shall find the right answer when we seek for the solution of another and easier question: why, that is, the apostle does not, in summing up the object of his annunciation, use the simple accusative, τὸν λόγον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπαγγέλλομεν, instead of saying, περὶ τοῦ λόγου. These two are by no means equivalent. We might expect to find τὸν λόγον ἀπαγγέλλομεν in the beginning of the Gospel, or in the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or, in fact, of any document which might be occupied with the person of our Lord; but it is obvious to the most superficial consideration, that our Epistle neither gives nor professes to give a detailed disclosure of the characteristics of the person and nature of the Logos. It is true that the Logos is the fundamental matter and pith of the Epistle; not, however, His person in itself, but in its effects, in its glorious outbeamings, which only in an indirect way lead to any conclusions concerning His own nature as a person. Consequently the apostle announces assuredly περὶ τοῦ λόγου, merely things which stand connected with the Logos, but not directly τὸν λόγον. From this point of view we can explain primarily the clause: περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς. This phrase also carries us back to the prologue of the Gospel. We read, ch. i. 4, concerning the Logos, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν; in ch. xiv. 6 the Lord calls Himself absolutely the Life; and, according to ch. v. 26: ἔδωκεν ὁ πατὴρ τῷ υἱῷ ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. It might appear, from this combination, as if the expression λόγον τῆς ζωῆς signified only the Logos who hath life, the true life, in Himself. But a closer study of the passages quoted shows that in all of them life comes into consideration not as shut up in the Logos alone, but also as streaming forth from Him, so that His life is at the same time a power penetrating and filling the world. So even in ch. i. 4 of

the Gospel, the words which immediately follow declare that ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων; and in ch. v. 26 the Lord makes it emphatic that He had life in Himself, only to demonstrate His authority as the Giver of life, as the ζωοποιῶν. And the same holds good of ch. iv. 6 when we consider the clause added: οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμοῦ, which states the design of the definitions of Himself given by Christ in the former member of the sentence. But in order to arrive at a surer determination of the meaning of λόγος τῆς ζωῆς in our passage, we must consider another series of Johannaean passages—those, namely, in which, as here, the life is the genitival definition of another name, such as ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, John vi., and φῶς τῆς ζωῆς, ch. viii. 12. These passages also lay down not only that the bread and the light are themselves living, but that they are life-giving also. In the latter of them, the words ὁ ἀκολουθῶν μοι ἕξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς do not aim to show that where there is life merely Christ will become to that life light also, but that the light which He gives awakens life; and, that ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς makes emphatic not the internal quality of the bread, but its effect as such, is proved, apart from other considerations, by ver. 33, where the words ἄρτος ζωὴν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ prescribe the sense in which the ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς ought in this connection to be understood.

Thus also in our passage we shall, guided by the analogy of these collective parallels, understand by the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, not only the Logos so far as He has life, but so far also as He gives life. As it lies in the nature of light that it is not only luminous itself, but also makes other things luminous, so it lies in the idea of the Logos, as viewed by our apostle, that He communicates and diffuses whatever He is, and therefore His life. This latter aspect could here least of all be excluded; for the apostle's design is not to impart any purely theoretical communications concerning that which is in Christ, but to set it forth as the possession of His people; and he sums up the scope of his Epistle, ch. v. 13, as consisting in this, that we by means of our faith should know ourselves in possession of life. That

which, therefore, conclusively and distinctly, the writer would announce, is the life; as appears plainly from the circumstance that in the expression λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, in ver. 2, he selects and makes prominent that element which is the most important,—that is, the life. Thus, when the apostle says that he would make his record περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς, he indicates, by means of the genitive, that element on account of which he speaks generally of the Logos,—that is, of the Logos in as far as He is life, and, according to what follows, life become manifest and communicable. Thus, while it is the Logos which certainly is present to his view, it is not the Person in Himself, and as such, that is the matter of his announcement: not His acts nor His process, but only that quality in Him which is life, life in His person and flowing from it. Fundamentally, therefore, it is *quid* and not a *quis* of which the apostle would speak; hence he is justified in saying that he declares not τὸν λόγον, but more generally περὶ τοῦ λόγου; and he is right in defining the object of his announcement not as masculine, but as neuter.

Since it is plain that the expression περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς can denote only the same object of announcement which the preceding relatival clauses indicate, the task lies before us to ascertain whether our definition of that object accords with all these. It is found that it does in the highest degree: the same interfusion of person and thing meets us as in the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς. Of course it may be objected, that what the disciples heard, saw, and touched had not been the life which was hidden in Christ, but the Person, the Logos, Himself; and it might seem that this is fatal both to our explanation of the neutral pronouns and to our definition of the object generally. But let this be closely examined. By the ἀκούειν certainly not the mere sound of Christ's words is to be understood, but the substance of His discourse; what was that but the announcement of the life which was in Christ, and which was to flow into the apostles? Surely, too, by the ὁρᾶν and θεᾶσθαι was not signified merely the beholding of the corporeal form of the Lord, so that a Caiaphas might have

been included under the plural ἑωράκαμεν; but what they beheld was His works, not according to their outward occurrence, but according to their inward significance; and what did the disciples see, other than that the Lord both was the life and imparted it? Finally, it has probability in its favour preliminarily, and will hereafter be more fully shown, that the ψηλαφᾶν refers directly to the narrative of Thomas after the resurrection. Moreover, it is demonstrable that even this last expression does not allude to the touching of the person of Christ as such, but to the knowledge of Him as the life which the touching was the medium of obtaining. We know it had been the opinion of the disciples that He who appeared was an apparition, an appearance which belonged essentially to the dead and had only the semblance of life. By means of the ψηλαφᾶν Thomas discerned that the Saviour had in Himself true, perfect, and not merely seeming life,—in fact, that He was the Conqueror of death. The main thing, then, was not the handling of the Logos, but of the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς. And when, in virtue of that touch, he broke out into the words "My Lord and my God!" the Lord approved Himself to him not merely as the Possessor of life, but as the Dispenser of it. For the rest, what we have now arrived at is as follows. As St. John says that what he had heard, had seen, had touched, was the matter of his annunciation, he cannot mean the annunciation of external occurrences, such as the words and acts of the Lord; for the Epistle contains directly no such matters. No more can he mean the seeing, hearing, touching of the person of the God-man in itself; for that would have required a masculine form at the outset. He means rather the seeing, hearing, and touching of the Lord as of the life. In fine, the apostle speaks of Christ, but not of Christ as a person,—not of the Son in Himself, but of the Son as He is the life. In this way every word of the clause finds its full and unrestricted meaning.

Let us now descend to details. The relative clauses which introduce the Epistle are grouped primarily in two parts: the first declares the objective existence of the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς from the beginning, the others declare His mani-

festation as in the presence of the apostles. But these two divisions are, in the style adopted by the writer to arrange and connect the words, not to be viewed as antithetic, but as gradational. The contrast is not between the eternal existence and the temporal manifestation to certain persons, and at a specific season,—had it been so, we should have read ὃ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἦν, νυνὶ δὲ ἡμεῖς ἀκηκόαμεν, or ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀκηκόαμεν. But the ἀκούειν is an advancement on the εἶναι, as is plain from the precedence of the ἦν in the former clause and the absence of the ἡμεῖς in the latter. The meaning of the earlier words will be made more plain by a comparison with the Gospel. This begins with ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος; in antithesis to the ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησε of Genesis, St. John writes ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν: when God made all things, the Logos was already in existence. Here, on the other hand, the question is not of the priority of the Logos as opposed to the world, but of the priority of His being as opposed to His manifestation: the life that filled eternity had entered into the world of manifestation. Further, our ἀπ' ἀρχῆς is to be noted in its relation to the ἐν ἀρχῇ of the Gospel. In the latter we must understand, following the pervasive parallel with the first words of Genesis, that ἐν ἀρχῇ is the same as the בְּרֵאשִׁית of Gen. i. 1,—that is, the element of the first creating, of the beginning of the creature, is contained in it. If we take the word in the same sense in our own passage, then the apostle affirms that ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, since the beginning of the creation, that of which he will speak, the true life, existed. Nothing would then be said in this passage of the pre-temporal, pre-creaturely existence of the true life, and the possessor of that life, the Word; nor, indeed, was anything necessary to be said. But ἀρχή may be understood in another sense,—that is, not as the beginning of the world, and therefore of time, but as the starting-point of human thought in its way over the limits of the creaturely universe. As we can form no conception of timelessness, we are wont to define that which was before the creation by terms taken from time,—even this "before" introduces the temporal idea where it does not belong, for we cannot shake off the restraints of time

and space. In this sense, as a help to express the notion of eternity, ἀρχή is often employed in Scripture. The beginning of the world is not then denoted, as in Gen. i.; but the absolute First, going before all things else. Thus, for example, in the passage of the Old Testament which lies at the basis of the Logos-doctrine, Prov. viii. 23: [Κύριος] ἐθεμελίωσέ με ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸ τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι, where the last words show that the ἐν ἀρχῇ cannot be understood of the beginning of the world, but designates eternity. Furthermore, in 2 Thess. xi. 13, according to the right reading, εἵλετο ὑμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς εἰς σωτηρίαν, where ἀπ' ἀρχῆς may be supposed to express the same thought as elsewhere is expressed by πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. Similarly, the description of Christ as ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος, Rev. i. 8, is intended to teach the truth, not only that Christ lives through all time, but that He is above time: in fact, to declare His super-temporal nature. To accept in this way the ἀπ' ἀρχῆς of our own passage is recommended to us by the thought which St. John aims to express: it cannot be his design to assert, that, since the world was, Christ, or the eternal life, has been; but he would describe the absolute primordial life of Christ Himself. When we clearly perceive that in the whole verse the notion of ζωή is that which floats before the apostle's vision, we shall be constrained to accept this idea as the substance also of the ὃ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς: the eternal life, which I would publish to you, was before all time, existing therefore before all manifestation of itself. As in Prov. viii. 22 it is said of Wisdom that she was the beginning of the ways of God, so here it is said of the life; for both had from eternity rested in the Logos, who Himself is or was the Wisdom and the Life.

But that which thus has its essence in the eternities has become to the apostle and to his fellow-apostles—this is evidently the meaning of the plural form—the object of personal and most interior experience. As St. Paul, with all his independence, and notwithstanding his self-assured relation even to the other apostles, finds it a necessity, when he writes officially and of his office, to regard his own person as part only of a greater whole,—that is, of the apostolate ordained

of Christ,—and therefore to use the plural, so also it is a necessity to St. John. We note in the stream of his discourse, always strengthening in its volume and never doing itself full justice, how important it was to him to make emphatic the reality of the amazing revelations which had been made to him; and how, on the other hand, an overwhelming joy on their account pours out everywhere on his words its inspiring influence. Between the four predicates, which describe the manifestation of what was from the beginning, we find a twofold relation in the fact that the last two by a single ὅ are linked closely together; these take the place of one whole, as over against the first two predicates; while, again, between the first and second, and further, between the third and fourth predicates, an advance is indicated through the instrumental definition which is connected with the second and fourth particularly. Thus we have two pairs of clauses; and there is, indeed, an elevation of meaning discernible first between each pair, and then also between the first and the second pair. First, by the ἀκηκόαμεν the altogether general thought is expressed of a knowledge touching the object; it is not yet said whether that was the result of direct hearing or indirectly through a third hand. The ὁρᾶν takes a step in advance, with its addition τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, an addition which affirms the extraordinary character belonging to this immediate contemplation: "it is scarcely credible, but I affirm it, with our own eyes we saw it." The ὁρᾶν in holy writ always stands higher than ἀκούειν; it indicates the most assured and the most incontestable evidence. Again, we have the ἐθεασάμεθα. The word by its root (comp. θάμβος, θαῦμα) points to a seeing which, in regard to its *object*, is connected with astonishment and wonder; something was exhibited to the apostles which was most worthy to be beheld and contemplated. With regard to the seeing *subject*, it connects the perfect energy and intensity of the act; the word itself is stronger than ὁρᾶν, and describes a purposed and most diligent beholding. The ψηλαφᾶν finally establishes, so to speak, the most material kind of knowledge, which excludes even the faintest doubt. Now, as we cannot, of

course, think of an accidental or fortuitous touching of the Lord, while obviously the position at the close of the four predicates leads to the conclusion that, with ψηλαφᾶν, as with θεᾶσθαι, the intention is to make prominent a deliberate and conscious and purposed attainment of knowledge, we arrive necessarily, in a new and striking way, at the relation between the first and second pair of predicates. Ὁρᾶν and ἀκούειν indicate immediate perceptions of sense; θεᾶσθαι and ψηλαφᾶν indicate investigation pursued with full purpose and diligence, and therefore with all exactitude. Now, as St. John, and only he, in the Gospel records the transaction with Thomas, in which precisely this industrious θεᾶσθαι and ψηλαφᾶν plays a part, it is almost evident that in these words he is thinking of that event, and generally of the time after the resurrection. If this is the right point of view to assume for the interpretation of the last pair of predicates, the change of tense is at once explained, namely, that the first two verbs are in the perfect, and the last two in the aorist; the former are to describe the evidences of the sense running through the whole of the life of Christ, and completed as one whole; the latter by the aorists point to definite historical individual occurrences, which are to be described as such.

Thus St. John has given a twofold utterance concerning the object of his publication: that He in His nature is eternal, and therefore divine; and also that He descended into the domain of human, yea, sensible experience, and thus became manifest, so that He became known in a perfectly assured manner. More distinctly is the object of the writing laid down in the words περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς; the subject is the λόγος, but, as we have seen, the Logos, not as in Himself, but as He is the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς; and precisely this makes it clear why the apostle lays so much stress on the θεᾶσθαι and ψηλαφᾶν of the risen Lord; why the Lord was so emphatically present to his eye as risen. For Christ had indeed from the beginning of His ministry manifested Himself as the life, and, like the χάρις καὶ ἀλήθεια, the ζωή also had ever been reflected from His face; but beyond all comparison more abundantly did the cha-

racteristic of ζῶν and ζωοποιῶν declare itself in Him when the long-restrained source of life was fully unsealed in the resurrection: ἐὰν μὴ ὁ κόκκος τοῦ σίτου ἀποθάνῃ, αὐτὸς μόνος μένει, ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ, πολὺν καρπὸν φέρει.

Verse 2.

(Καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἑωράκαμεν, καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον, ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν.)

But with all this, St. John has not laid down precisely enough the object of his Epistle. Of the two ideas contained in λόγος τῆς ζωῆς he therefore singles out and makes prominent that one which concerns him particularly; not the person bearing and enfolding the life, but this life itself is the main idea. The Gospel begins with ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, for it treats of the person of Him through whose mediation the ζωή came. The Epistle says ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, for its object is not the person, but the influences flowing through the medium of the person. It is true that in the Gospel also the influences and energies of the Logos are depicted; but it is in such a manner as to exhibit His person in richer light, and define that person more precisely. It is true also that, conversely, the Epistle speaks of the person of the Logos; but it is in such a manner that thereby the influences of that person should be made more conspicuous. This life has entered into the world of manifestation, ἐφανερώθη. It is obvious that it could not be said of the ζωή that it σὰρξ ἐγένετο; for while the λόγος, the person, might indeed become man, no attribute or qualification of Him could be incarnate. The eternal life of the Logos with the Father, and the earthly life below, are diverse forms in which the ζωή clothes itself; itself, however, becomes not σάρξ; rather, as the result of the incarnation, it presents itself to us as manifested. But, apart from the logical impossibility in such a passage as ours of the σὰρξ ἐγένετο, it is to be remarked that elsewhere the Epistle of St. John betrays a preference for the more general φανεροῦσθαι. And naturally so. For the assumption of flesh was in fact only the means of the manifestation, and,

moreover, a medium which had not eternal continuance; for, when the Lord was glorified, He remained indeed man, but not *σάρξ*. The flesh, whose note is weakness, was penetrated and swallowed up by the power of the Spirit that pervaded it. In our Epistle, where the subject is the life-giving energy of the Lord, and at this point, where the first verse has indicated that this was to be found specifically in the risen Saviour, who was no longer *σάρξ*, the more general *φανεροῦσθαι* is on all accounts the most adequate and pertinent expression.

What has been said makes it clear that *ζωή* cannot here be a personal name of the Logos; it is rather that quality or characteristic of the Logos which the writer would by means of his Epistle implant in us. The *ζωή* is a potency constituting the personality, but not the person himself. What has led to the contrary opinion, namely, that *ζωή* is a definition of the person of the Logos, is the second clause of our verse, where we read, *ἡ ζωὴ ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα*, that being declared concerning the life which in the Gospel is declared concerning the Logos. But the testimony of the Gospel may with equal propriety be turned against this view; for there it runs expressly, *ζωὴ ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ*, and thus even in the Gospel the life is not used as a personal name, but as a characteristic inherent in the Logos. What there is of right in this opinion, which, however, we cannot accept, is that here, more than elsewhere, the eternal life is described as something enfolded in Christ and inseparable from His person. Only through the manifestation of the Son could the life become manifest; but not on that account is the life an idea which may be used interchangeably with Christ or the Logos.

This life, which has been manifested in the Logos, and which we have learned to recognise as the object of apostolical annunciation, is in the second half of the verse more precisely defined as *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*,—that is, looked at on the side most important for the aim of the writer. At the outset it must be noted that "eternal life" is not to St. John merely a term for unbroken continuance in being, as if it were simply equivalent to the *ζωὴ ἀκατάλυτος* of Heb. v. 6; that it does not define the form of this life so

much as the nature and meaning of it: ζωὴ αἰώνιος is, in other words, a description of *divine* life, of the life which is in God, and which by God is communicated. It is with this expression as it is with the βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. To the οὐρανός the New Testament does undoubtedly attach first of all a local meaning. When Christ teaches us to pray that the will of God may be done here as it is done in heaven, and when we read of a descending from and ascending to heaven, this meaning is sufficiently manifest. But then the word passes from the external and local into the internal and spiritual or ethical sense. The βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is not only a kingdom whose seat is heaven in the ordinary sense, but, at the same time, a kingdom which has the same ethical quality that characterizes the super-terrestrial world, and hence this βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν may indeed be literally on earth. In other words, οὐρανός is the antithesis not only of the physical, but also of the ethical idea of the κόσμος. The same thing holds good of the ζωὴ αἰώνιος; primarily it denotes, of course, the antithesis of the external, temporal finiteness and restriction of the earthly life, as, for instance, when we read of a ζήσεσθαι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. But when Christ calls Himself ζωή, or is called ζωὴ αἰώνιος, John xiv. 3, 1 John v. 20, this notion recedes before the internal quality of the life so defined; by ζωὴ αἰώνιος a life is meant which really and truly is life, life in the fullest sense, life and nothing but life, in a word, divine life; while all earthly life is in some sense death.

This last interpretation of the ζωὴ αἰώνιος is an absolute necessity in our present passage. For only when it is thus interpreted does the added clause, ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, acquire a satisfactory meaning. At the outset, the fact that instead of the simple ἥ the connection by ἥτις is preferred, indicates that the interjected relative clause contains a reason for the preceding name, or an explanation of it. But, apart from that, only two ways of interpreting the relative clause are possible. The first would be to consider the apostle as resuming by means of it what he had said about the life: what he had said having been

the εἶναι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς and the φανερωθῆναι. But we must reject this explanation, because the εἶναι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς is not really taken up again, but instead of it comes in the idea of εἶναι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, which is, after all, another; here the counterparts are being in the Father and being in the world, while in ver. 1 they are being from the beginning and manifestation in time; and however nearly related these two pairs may be, they are not identical, and the one is not a resumption of the other. But, granted that the substance of what precedes was to be recapitulated by the relative clause, and thus εἶναι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα was to be altogether equivalent to εἶναι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, yet even this does not give αἰώνιος the idea of mere superiority to the limitations of time, for then the αἰώνιος would itself be a recapitulation of the εἶναι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, and this latter would be twice resumed, once by the αἰώνιος, and a second time by ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. But, as it has been made evident, this whole notion of an analepsis of what had preceded by means of the relative clause is not to be justified; there is, however, another analepsis which commends itself, namely, that the relative clause gives a reason for the declaration, ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον. That this ζωή is an αἰώνιος—that is, as seen above, a divine life, life in the true ethical sense—is established and proved by the fact that it springs from the Father; that St. John can and will announce it, is established and proved by the fact that it has passed into manifestation, that it has become knowable, and therefore communicable. It is not the life, as it is in God the Father, that the apostle can and will declare, but the life which is in the Son, who says of Himself, John v. 26, vi. 57: ἐγὼ ζῶ διὰ τὸν πατέρα. The life of the Father is sealed and shut up in itself, and that which is said of the Father generally may be said of His life: Θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἑώρακεν, ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς ἐξηγήσατο. It is the life of the Son of God, more particularly of the incarnate Son of God, that St. John beheld and would fain implant in the church. Hence it is not said, ἥτις ἦν ἐν τῷ Θεῷ, but, πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. And here, as in the prologue of the Gospel, we must carefully mark that it is

not παρά; but πρός,—that is, it is thus to be asserted that the life existing in the Logos is not a life originating in Himself, but one that is His only in virtue of a permanent relation to the Father, through the eternal turning towards Him. And it is precisely this reference of itself to the Father that makes αἰώνιος ζωή the true and divine life.

Let us now retrace our steps and measure our progress to this point. In always more specific definitions and always narrowing circles, the apostle has laid down the object of his writing more and more precisely. It is something eternal, yet, at the same time, something to him made known in immediate and therefore most assured experience, that is the first point of his announcement. It is something, again, as he still more closely defines it, which concerns the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς. That is, in the third stage, it is precisely the life existing in the Son; and, finally, this as the only true life in the fullest sense, as ζωὴ αἰώνιος. While he places this true life in inseparable conjunction with the Logos, and makes it matter of knowledge and announcement only through the manifestation of the Logos, he places it thus in antithesis to all that before was called or might be called life. All previous life, even that which most of all bore the stamp of divinity in itself, was nevertheless mingled with sin and death, and therefore no true life. Not till the manifestation of Jesus Christ did the ζωὴ αἰώνιος in its deepest sense appear, but with its appearance all previous life was stamped with the character of darkness.

As to the object of the apostolical announcement, we might now feel tolerably clear; but the manner in which it is and becomes known has yet to be considered. This is defined to us by the threefold predicative: ἑωράκαμεν, μαρτυροῦμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν. In these we have a climax; the predicate that precedes is always the basis for that which follows. Let us, in order to see this more clearly, observe the three predicates in their inverted order. The last, ἀπαγγέλλομεν, denotes a promulgation for the hearers' sake, through such means to be edified; what the apostle himself knows and enjoys he would make over to the

hearers of his message. But if the message lays claim to be accepted, it must itself be true, and this presupposition is guaranteed by the *μαρτυρεῖν*. *Μαρτυρία*, to wit, is ever the declaration of something self-experienced and self-observed by the witness. A witness is not primarily appointed to be serviceable to others, but purely to serve the cause of truth. Whether it is profitable or not, received or rejected, is a matter of indifference to testimony as such: it is an *actus forensis*, though in this case the forum is a divine one only. In the *ἀπαγγέλλειν* the emphasis lies on the *communication* of truth; in the *μαρτυρεῖν* the emphasis lies on the communication of *truth*. As already noted, the *μαρτυρία* rests always on personal experience, hence the word which Christ, John iii. 11, spoke to Nicodemus, *ὃ ἑωράκαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν*; hence the sedulousness with which the apostles in the Acts present themselves as witnesses of the resurrection; hence in our passage the *ἑωράκαμεν* placed before the *μαρτυροῦμεν*. That this word and not *ἀκηκόαμεν* is chosen, has its reason in the fact that the former rather than the latter expresses the direct evidence of the senses, so that *ὁρᾶν* is alone selected of the four verbs of perception used in the first verse; as well as in the fact that in all languages the idea of seeing is used for sensible cognizance of every kind. In the previous verse it is easily intelligible why the apostle spoke in the plural, for the experiences recorded there had always been his in the fellowship of the other apostles; but for the same reason he here also writes *ἀπαγγέλλομεν*, since, though he alone writes the Epistle that follows, he recognises himself in the act as only the organ of the apostolical function as a whole.

VERSE 3.

Ὃ ἑωράκαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν· καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Thus the object of the Epistle has evolved itself to our apprehension in a series of more and more definite ideas.

Nevertheless, the question as to the substance of his annunciation is not to St. John the most important. This is obvious when we consider that he introduces the more exact specification of it as *ζωή*, and indeed *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, only in a parenthesis. That cannot possibly be the most momentous thing in the view of an author which he inserts in a parenthetical manner. It is clear also when we consider that in the third verse the object is reintroduced in the first more general expressions: *ὃ ἑωράκαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν*. This very circumstance points to the conclusion that the emphasis in the context before us does not rest upon the object of the annunciation, but upon the assured knowledge of that object. Even in the parenthesis of the second verse, the idea, for the sake of which generally it is interpolated, is that of the *ἐφανερώθη*. We have in the first two verses a double series of ideas and a double tendency; one series specifies the object about which it treats, the other the assurance concerning the nature of that object. But that the latter series is the most important for the present aim of the apostle, is shown by the very commencement of ver. 3, which, recapitulating all that went before, selects an expression which defines the object altogether in its generality, while it defines the certitude of experience concerning it in the most pregnant way. If it had run *τὴν ζωὴν ἀπαγγέλλομεν*, this latter element would, conversely, have receded instead. That the order of the words is not the same as in ver. 1 (here *ἑωράκαμεν* before *ἀκηκόαμεν*) cannot be regarded as a designed gradation, the less so as we certainly have such a gradation in ver. 1, and there the *ἀκούειν* is the first verb. The present order is rather to be explained from the circumstance that the *ὁρᾶν* of the former verb is still lingering in the apostle's ear, and therefore presented itself first. But that only *ὁρᾶν* and *ἀκούειν*, and not also *θεᾶσθαι* and *ψηλαφᾶν*, are repeated, is to be accounted for on the ground that for an epanalepsis or resumption, which should be as short as possible, and yet as comprehensive as possible, the most general expressions are the most pertinent.

After the substance and trustworthiness of his document

are satisfied, the writer lays down further the aim of it. We may interpret this in two ways: either the apostle purposes to establish a fellowship between *himself* and the readers, or between *God* and the readers. In the former case the κοινωνία μεθ' ἡμῶν would be translated as *communio inter nos et vos;* in the latter as *eadem quae jam nobis* (*mihi*) *est communio sc. cum Deo.* The decision depends upon two expressions: the μεθ' ἡμῶν and then the καί before ὑμεῖς. We decide for the former of the two explanations: the apostle says *primarily* that he would establish a fellowship between *himself* and the readers, not that he would introduce them into that fellowship which he had with God. To be more particular, it is, in the first place, not true, as some have maintained, that κοινωνία is in the New Testament employed only of communion with God: the passage Acts ii. 42 sufficiently refutes that idea. Secondly, it is highly forced to take the μετά in the same sentence, connected with the same substantive twice in close succession used, in two different senses: the first time (κοινωνία μεθ' ἡμῶν) to indicate the same *common* fellowship, as it were, *eadem communio quam nos inter nos habemus;* the second time (ἡ κοινωνία ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρός) to indicate the subject *with* whom I have fellowship. And, finally, how in all the world can the expression κοινωνία μεθ' ἡμῶν then define the same thing as ἡ αὐτὴ κοινωνία ἣν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν? For all these reasons it is plain that the purpose of the apostle is, in the first place, to establish a communion between himself and his readers. And this makes the reference of the καί as before ἡμεῖς clear; on this supposition it cannot mean to say that the readers also, like the apostles, should have fellowship with God, but that the readers of this Epistle should, like other Christians, enter into fellowship with the apostles.

And thus, once more, we have the elements of decision as to the right reading: the reading ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, which on external grounds is to be preferred, yields an altogether appropriate sense on this interpretation. The first καί after ἀπαγγέλλομεν emphasizes the community of the *announcement* which is made to the readers as to others

before them, and the second *καί* before *ὑμεῖς* the community and equality of the *blessing* which should be the fruit of this announcement. That this bond between apostles and churches was not only a high benefit to the churches, but that it was found such on the side of the apostles also, we have a Pauline testimony in Rom. i. 11, 12; and the stress laid upon this is in precise harmony with the drift of our Epistle, which aims always at the awakening of *ἀγάπη*, or the sentiment of fellowship. It may be thought surprising that St. John here speaks as if this community or fellowship was yet to be constituted, the readers being obviously Christians already, and therefore such a link between them and the apostles already established. To this it might be replied that the readers were as yet unknown to the apostle, and that of necessity the fellowship between them would become much deeper if they entered into personal association, even though it were only through the medium of a written communication. But apart from the historical grounds of this hypothesis, there is a deeper reason to be sought. It is quite customary with St. John, on the one hand, to consider his readers as perfected and in possession of all the blessings of salvation, while yet, on the other hand, he regards them as altogether in the beginnings of development; as when he expressly writes his Gospel to Christian men, and yet avows the creation of faith in them as his aim (ch. xx. 20).

In order to understand the second part of the verse, it is of primary importance to assign the force of *ἡμετέρα*. Till now, the first person has been always appropriated to the apostles. If we would accept it so here, the meaning would be: "the fellowship which we the apostles have is a fellowship with the Father and the Son." Then this sentence would be a simple declaration, and by no means dependent on *ἵνα*; for the abiding fact of the fellowship between God and the apostles is altogether independent of the Epistle that follows. This interpretation can be held fast, however, only so long as we explain the preceding words, *κοινωνίαν μεθ' ἡμῶν*, as "the same fellowship with us," that is, the same which we have; but this

explanation we have proved untenable. But if we translate these words, "that ye may enter into fellowship with us the apostles," it is impossible that the following ἡ κοινωνία ἡ ἡμετέρα can be referred again to the apostles: "and indeed we the apostles have fellowship with God." The essential main idea, that the readers also should have fellowship with God, is on this interpretation simply *not* expressed. Thus we are led to understand the ἡμετέρα otherwise, that is, in such a way as to make it combine the ἡμεῖς καὶ ὑμεῖς, the apostles and the readers. The writer presupposes that the aim prescribed in the preceding clause with ἵνα is accomplished, the fellowship with his readers which he desired is established, and is regarded in the expression ἡ κοινωνία ἡ ἡμετέρα as perfect. The manner and the meaning of this fellowship are now more clearly defined, that it is at the same time a fellowship with God. "The fellowship which each one of us must have with God I would show, but at the same time thereby also most closely bind us all together in one." Thus we shall make the second clause depend on the ἵνα, especially as the grammatical impossibility of supplying the conjunctive ᾖ is certainly not proved. And thus the junction of the latter part by καί has justice done to it. This can enter only when a new thought is introduced (καί), which, however, at the same time stands in something like antithesis to the preceding (δέ). So it is here; the subject was of brotherly fellowship, and now the new thought distinguished from the former is added. "But this fellowship should at the same time and essentially be a fellowship with God."

VERSE 4.

Καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν ᾖ πεπληρωμένη.

But not even this redoubled specification of his purpose, as given in what precedes, exhausts the apostle's design: his aim is not only to establish a fellowship whether with God or with the brethren; but this itself is to him again a means toward the elevation to its highest stage of their

individual interests and their attainment of the joy of life (*χαρά*), and that in its most perfect degree (*πεπληρωμένη*). This is the substance of the fourth verse. *Ταῦτα γράφομεν ὑμῖν* (the reading *ἡμεῖς* is neither sufficiently attested, nor is there any internal reason for such prominence to the subject) cannot without violence be referred to anything but the letter before us, to the *ἀπαγγελία* announced in the previous verse and defined more closely as to its tendency. If we ask by what means this joy is brought to a state of *πεπληρωμένη*, we are led to the everywhere observable coincidence between the Epistle and the Gospel of the apostle. Specifically we have in the latter the *πλήρωσις τῆς χαρᾶς*. Primarily we find it in ch. xv. 11.; there we read: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I keep My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. And this have I said unto you, that My joy may remain in you, *καὶ ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν πληρωθῇ*." The meaning is, that the keeping of the Father's commands is Christ's joy, and will be that of His disciples, yea, that their joy would thereby reach its highest point. The commandment, the fulfilment of which is here in question, is then in ver. 12 mentioned as *ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἠγάπησε ὑμᾶς*, and thus the *πλήρωσις* of the joy is attained according to this passage through the confirmation of brotherly love. With this let Phil. ii. 2 be compared, where the *πλήρωσις* of the apostolical joy is sought in this, that the church has *τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην*. A second time St. John's Gospel speaks of *χαρὰ πεπληρωμένη*, ch. xvii. 3; there the ground of it is given in the consciousness that Christ has kept His own, and that the Father will go on to keep them: thus fellowship with the Father and the Son begins the consummated joy. If we combine together the two passages in the Gospel, the fellowship with the Lord and fellowship with the brethren is St. John's ground of *χαρὰ πεπληρωμένη*; literally, therefore, the same which is specified here in the combination of ver. 3 with ver. 4 as its ground and substance. We may further point attention to Phil. iv. 4, 5, where both these are still laid down as the foundation of a permanent, con-

tinuous, intense Christian joy: ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς comes first as the perfected fellowship with the Lord in the near prospect, and then the requirement resulting from this, τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, follows as the manifestation of brotherly love in its widest comprehension. And, in fact, all joy, that is, every heightened feeling of life, rests upon the consciousness of a communion ever more firmly established and articulated; hence the fulfilment of all joy is produced, first, through the highest object with whom this fellowship is entered into, that is, by God, and then through the participation of others in this fellowship; accordingly, throughout the Scripture the community of the heavenly songs of praise is regarded as an essential factor of blessedness.

It is accepted by common consent, that with the first four verses the introduction of the Epistle is complete. But as at the very outset a natural and justifiable expectation would independently arise that the introduction will stand in an organic relation to the whole, so we are all the more warranted in expecting it in the present case, inasmuch as the apostle has in express terms laid down the scope of his communication. We shall venture, therefore, to enter on the Epistle with the presumption that we shall find in it a twofold element: the requirement to enter into fellowship with God; but this in such a form that from it shall issue the requirement to enter into brotherly fellowship. Finally, however, we shall be constrained to expect that through both the apostle will lead us to perfected joy. Whether, indeed, this presupposition, thus encouraged by the author himself, will be found warranted in the Epistle, and if so, in what manner this end is attained, will be shown by a detailed interpretation.

VERSE 5.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία, ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστι, καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.

In one most impressive sentence St. John sums up the whole matter of his annunciation. This message—we

must read *ἀγγελία*, not *ἐπαγγελία*, which, according to New Testament usage (2 Tim. i. 1 being no exception), could only have meant promise; here, as in ch. iii. 11, the copyists inserted the familiar *ἐπαγγελία* instead of the *ἀγγελία*, which is found nowhere else—was communicated to the apostles *ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*, that is, by Christ, who is the last most immediate antecedent (comp. ch. v. 3); and they communicate this fundamental declaration, thus unique, in their turn. *Quod Filius annunciavit, renunciat apostolus.* The substance of the record which had been given to him St. John condenses into one clause: *Θεὸς φῶς*. At the first glance this seems to have no discernible connection with the constituent ideas of the introduction. The *ζωή* was to have been the subject, and that as manifested by One who had come within the range of personal and sensible observation and experience. But both the idea of life and that of sensible experience here fall into the background and disappear. The key to the connection in this case also is found in the prologue of the Gospel. There, too, we find the three ideas which have hitherto entered as constituent elements; and we find them in the same order, *λόγος, ζωή, φῶς*; there also as here, and here as there, the antithesis being supplied to *φῶς* by the *σκοτία*. Now it is manifest, that in the Gospel *φῶς* is a closer definition of the *ζωή*, and that in its highest stage. As *ζωή* the Logos created all things which generally were created; as *φῶς* He is described only in relation to man: *ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων*. This definition of the *λόγος* as *φῶς* is that on which the whole Gospel rests; for the following words, *τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει καὶ ἡ σκοτία οὐ κατέλαβεν αὐτό*, might serve as the programme, particularly of the first great division of the Gospel down to ch. xii. They declare, as the present tense itself indicates, something altogether universal, running through the entire course of history, which reached in the work and influence of the manifested incarnate Logos its highest stage of expression and development.

Inasmuch as the life is described as the light of men, it is declared that He manifested Himself for them in a

manner in which it was not possible that He would manifest Himself in regard to the rest of the creation. It is self-understood that the designation light is not to be understood in the physical sense, but in its reference to the spiritual domain. It is the property of light that it communicates itself to those objects which are capable of receiving it, and makes them light. We may compare that other word of Scripture: "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." There our thought is expressly declared: the eye receives the light, and thereby becomes itself enlightened and enlightening. So also in the prologue of the Gospel: the whole creation manifests the Logos as the life; but only man is capable of light, that is, can so receive the nature of the Logos pouring forth toward him, that he himself shall be consciously transformed into it. Inasmuch as man has not only a passive relation to his life, that is, instinctively fulfils his destiny, but an active one also, his life being at all points and throughout ethically ordered, therefore he has the capacity not only to receive *life* from the Logos, but also to have this life as a *light*, that is, to be able to discern or know Him in His nature, in order to reflect His image in himself. Now, wherever this destination is forgotten by man, and he closes against it the eye which was given him in order to be able to receive the Logos into himself as light, there is the dominion of darkness as the *σκοτία*. According to St. John's view, what constitutes the ground or characteristic of belonging to the *σκοτία*, is not the fact of not coming under the influence of the light, but only the fact of that not submitting to it which *ought or was destined* to be subject to it. Only in the domain of the rational world does the Logos manifest Himself as *φῶς*; hence only in regard to that is there any question of *φῶς* or *σκοτία*; all else lies outside of the sphere of these counterparts, and the two ideas have no longer any application. Accordingly, what we have learned from John i. 4 is, that the revelation of the Logos as light is the highest stage of His revelation, that it is specifically a higher potency of His manifestation

as life, and that therefore it takes place only in relation to men, because these alone have the organ for receiving Him as φῶς. To the same relation between ζωή and φῶς we are led by John viii. 12, ἔχειν τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς: the Lord promises His believing disciples the life, not, however, life in general, but in its development as φῶς,—such life, namely, of His as becomes at the same time light for them. Where the φῶς is, there is also ζωή; but the converse does not hold good. When a man is said to be a partaker of eternal life, ζωὴ αἰώνιος, that takes place through his becoming a τέκνον φωτός. Thus it is clear in what certain connection the message here announced, Θεὸς φῶς, stands with the introduction of the Epistle: to wit, inasmuch as here, precisely as in the Gospel, there is an ascent from the idea of the ζωή to that of the light, men having the possibility in the ordination of God for sharing in the life.

But there is another point of view from which, however little obvious it may be, the connection between the fifth verse and what precedes may be traced. Hitherto the stress had been laid on the φανέρωσις of the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, on His entering into the sphere of experience. And this element is noteworthy for the interpretation of ver. 5. In order to discern this clearly, let us start from another difficulty. We know that the declaration Θεὸς φῶς, which St. John lays down as the compendium of the message of Christ, does not occur in the Gospels in this particular form. Christ indeed is called φῶς, ch. i. 4, iii. 19, viii. 12, but not the Father. It may be said, of course, that in the Johannaean view, according to which Christ and the Father are one, so that he who sees the one sees also the other, there is direct propriety in assigning whatever Christ predicates of Himself to the Father also. But we do not need this extrication; nor need we seek for individual passages in which the ἀγγελία with which we now have to do is literally contained. For, as the whole substance of the Gospel may be epitomized in the expression Θεὸς ἀγάπη, even though in no one passage this phrase is found, because the real essential meaning of every saving word and every saving act is no other than this, that God is love; so also

the real essential meaning, patent to every unprejudiced eye, of all that Christ ever said and did, is no other than that which is summarized and announced in the words: Θεὸς φῶς. Θεὸς φῶς: for to this end was Christ born, and came into the world, that He might reveal the Father whom no man hath seen; and Θεὸς φῶς: for if, according to John i. 4, this is the peculiar vocation of mankind, that in relation to it God reveals Himself as φῶς, then all revelation of the Father through Christ becomes a manifestation as light. And if Christ in His whole life, in word and deed, reveals the Father, and yet this revelation of God as proceeding towards men is a revelation of God as φῶς, then the whole life of Christ, His person and His work, must have for its one meaning the proclamation Θεὸς φῶς; it is indeed the representation to the senses, in a sense the incarnation, of the truth: Θεὸς φῶς. Thus it is made clear that the φανέρωσις, made prominent in the introduction, of the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, His entering into personal, sensible perceptibility and observation, is the necessary basis for our affirmation that God is light; for all that the apostles had learnt concerning the Logos by hearing and seeing, beholding and handling, may be condensed into this one sentence.

But with all this investigation we have not in the slightest degree explained the meaning of this sentence. We do not yet know what it signifies that God is light, nor what thought was to be expressed by this designation. There is a difference between this passage and the others in which the fact that Christ is light appears. In these latter we have not so much to consider the immanent nature of Christ, or the definition of His essence, as an assertion or vindication of His being. Thus in John i. 4, 5, ἦν φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὸ φῶς φαίνει ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ, where it is obvious that the question is, not what the Logos is in Himself, but what He is and wills to be for men; in ch. iii. 19, where the light as a judicial power is treated of; in ch. viii. 12, where, apart from the expression φῶς τοῦ κόσμου, the light is represented as a power passing over or reaching to man. We may compare also ch. ix. 10, 11. Similarly, in our passage it is certainly affirmed that the

nature of God, which is light, will have its effect upon us, so that we also may *ἐν φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν*, or, to adopt St. Paul's parallel word, may be *τέκνα φωτός*. But, on the other hand, it is clear of itself that the practical vindication of Christ or of God as light presupposes a quality in Him corresponding, as in general every transitive energy implies an immanent characteristic. And it is this latter which in our passage, otherwise than in those before mentioned, is placed in the foreground. Not only does the general proposition *Θεὸς φῶς* produce the impression that it gives us a general definition of the divine essence, without any reference as yet to influence *ad extra*, but also the subsequent teaching that we should walk in the light, *ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί*, shows that the apostle is thinking of His being light as of an absolute, immanent characterization of God. As God is life, apart from any particular life-giving energy, so also He is light, apart from any enlightening act. Consequently we see how impossible it is to accept *φῶς* as simply equivalent to *σωτηρία*, salvation; for salvation is a relative idea, absolutely requiring the added thought of some one who is the object of the salvation, while God must be light, according to all that has been said, not only in a relative, but in an absolute sense also.

It is usual to illustrate the idea of the *φῶς* by making it a figure, in this case to be applied in the intellectual or moral direction; for example, as the figurative designation of the divine wisdom or holiness. But this way of looking at it does not meet all the requirements of the apostolical view. When we reflect that, in the most strikingly abundant and persistent way, the scriptures of both Testaments place God in peculiar and immediate relation to light,—calling it His garment, His dwelling-place, *φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον*, 1 Tim. vi. 15,—we shall be disposed to seek in these expressions for more than a mere figure of some particular attribute of God, and shall be constrained, giving up the purely figurative application altogether, to assign to them the meaning of reality. Moreover, to this we shall be forced by another passage of Scripture. In Jas. i. 17, God is directly called *πατὴρ τῶν φώτων*. This phrase cannot be intended

to designate God as only the Creator of the stars; it is nowhere, and in no connection, the manner of the New Testament to identify the creative activity of God with His fatherly relation: the latter always presupposes a fellowship of nature between Creator and creature, and therefore stands in a higher sphere than the former. Where there is a father, the question is not of production, but of generation. Accordingly God, in the passage quoted, must be called *πατὴρ τῶν φώτων*, only because the creatures or natures of light, which are intended here, are in some sense of the same nature with Him,—that is, because He is Himself light. Thus, when we have learned from Scripture that the definition of God as light or *φῶς* is a characterization of *essence*, there remains only the possibility that we have here a metaphorical description of His divine nature, and that the *φῶτα*, whose Father He is, are so called in a figurative sense. But that will not avail; for St. James, when he says *φῶτα*, is certainly thinking of light-natures in the ordinary sense: even if the expression *φῶτα* were not to be referred to the stars, but to any spiritual light-natures, yet even then the description would be used not on account of any ethical quality in them, but on account of the bodies of light with which Scripture customarily invests them. We must therefore hold to it as a scriptural view, that God is in the proper and unfigurative sense light.

Of course we do not mean to assign to Him material light, nor, indeed, that supernatural yet still material light which shed its beams around the Lord, or surrounded the angel forms; but we mean a light purely unmaterial. The matter stands simply thus: The earthly light is not the proper and real, and the description of God as light therefore figurative; but the divine light-nature is the true light, the earthly being only the divine light translated into the creating domain and the earthly reflection of it. Everywhere it is not the bodily and the material which is the reality, but the spiritual and the immaterial, which makes for itself a body in matter, and thus comes to manifestation. As the tabernacle was the copy of heavenly realities, not

merely a symbol, therefore, but a type, so in the end everything material is only the copy of heavenly realities. If, therefore, God is called light, we are taught to think that He possesses, in the fullest intensity and in the most real because spiritual manner, that which for us upon earth is the light. Consequently more is asserted than any particular attribute of God. All united attributes are far from furnishing the essence of God itself; they are only particular modalities, outbeamings, or forms of His nature: at the basis of them all lies the divine essence, as the source whence they flow; and this, His essence, the *θεία φύσις*, the primal ground of His being, it is which St. John defines as *φῶς*. The necessity of such a view will be evident at once, if we cease to think of spirit as mere force. All force presupposes something in which it inheres; and it is this something, this ground-essence in God, which is meant by the *φῶς*.

Thus our word *φῶς* is not intended to be a figure for any particular divine attribute, but it is the altogether real, though not materially understood, designation of the divine essence. We are carried now a step farther by the circumstance that we read, as following hard one on the other: *Θεὸς φῶς* and *Θεὸς ἐν τῷ φωτί*. These are by no means one and the same thing. It is only in the case of this word *φῶς* that such a variation of the phraseology is possible. We cannot, in the same way, say *Θεὸς ἐν τῇ ζωῇ*, but only *Θεὸς ζωή* or *ζωὴ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ*. The expression *Θεὸς ἐν τῷ φωτί* corresponds pretty nearly to the applications "light is His garment," or *φῶς οἰκῶν*. In all three the light is not thought of as in God, but, conversely, as surrounding God. Thus they lead us to consider a similar representation, in which St. Paul describes it by *μορφὴ Θεοῦ*, Phil. ii. 7. In this last-mentioned word we may most easily trace the idea which all these descriptions would set before us. To the *μορφὴ Θεοῦ* corresponds, in Phil. ii., the *μορφὴ δούλου*. Now, as the nature of the *μορφὴ δούλου* is further depicted by obedience, this leads us to conclude, and the connection of the passages confirms it, that the *μορφὴ Θεοῦ* is dominion. This is the figure which God has given Him-

self, the form under which we see and know Him, which Jesus Christ laid aside, and, instead of it, assumed the *μορφὴ δούλου*, when He became obedient. The lordship of God is thus a transitive idea; if we seek the corresponding immanent quality within the divine nature, in virtue of which God can exercise the dominion, we are led at once to the biblical idea of the *δόξα*. The Scripture, to wit, understands by *δόξα* the perfect unfolding of the divine essence in its altogether infinite riches,—the revelation of Himself *before Himself*, as distinguished from His revelation only in the creature and to the creature. Now this, His essence, which He reveals before Himself, is called *φῶς*; and inasmuch as this self-manifestation of God before Himself, His *δόξα*, is yet to be distinguished from His nature as pure potency, it is called His garment, or it is said of Him here: *Θεὸς ἐν τῷ φωτί*. As the clothing of the lily is inseparably bound up with its nature, and yet is the first *φανέρωσις* of its nature as unfolded in the germ, so the light-nature of God has become a *δόξα* surrounding Him, so that it may be said with equal propriety *Θεὸς φῶς*, and also *Θεὸς ἐν τῷ φωτί*.

As we have thus to keep steadily before our eyes the fact that by the word *φῶς*, the heavenly pattern of our light, something purely super-creaturely—the essence of God—is intended to be expressed, it becomes evident that we cannot think out and make clear, in human ideas, this divine nature. But, on the other hand, it is assuredly true that the apostles tell us nothing which should have no practical bearing, and therefore no conceivable meaning. Especially here, where St. John aims to deduce from the light-nature of God conclusions affecting us, he evidently must intend that with the expression *Θεὸς φῶς* should be connected an altogether definite meaning. All utterances concerning divine things transcend, it is true, all human understanding. Not, however, that they are therefore empty of meaning; it is only that we cannot seize their full import. Hitherto we have placed in the foreground that side of the apostolical utterance which points to depths which go beyond all fathoming of human thought; but now, on the

other hand, we must needs consider what it contains for us of practical and accessible bearing. The way is indicated for us by those passages of the Gospel, again and again referred to, in which Christ describes Himself as the light of the world, and the light of men. The enlightening energy of Christ has relation pre-eminently to the understanding of men: He shows them the right and the truth. He who would give clearness to others must have it himself; he who would enlighten must be light. Now, absolute clearness in human thought is to be found only when I know a thing altogether, and look through it on all sides, and in its connections. If God is to give this intelligence, He must of course have it Himself: that means, He must possess all truth. But the enlightening activity of God refers not merely to the impartation of certain abstract truths, but to the communication of the good generally, which, on its theoretical and intelligible side, we call the truth, and goodness on its practical side. If, then, God is the light of men, it means that in Him all goodness and all perfection dwell; there is no good which is not in Him; He is the πλήρωμα, out of the fulness of which we all receive. And this is the concrete and practical import of the word Θεὸς φῶς, that in Him is all perfection, all truth, blessedness, and holiness; and in such a sense in Him, that as the light everywhere diffuses around its own nature, so all that is good radiates from God.

What is beyond, that this metaphysical essence of God is to be conceived, not as the sum of individual perfections, but as the substance and archetype of the light, passes, indeed, human power of comprehension. But it is a gain even to know that such an original ground, such a primal substance, is in God, out of which all His perfections flow; to know, further, that it is such as may be most fitly described by the word φῶς, even though we cannot also know how this is to be conceived. Is it no enrichment of science, that chemical researches have detected to us the existence of ultra-violet colours, though we cannot discover them with the eye, and have no suspicion of their appearance? Or was it no enrichment of theology, that the union

of the two natures in Christ was defined by the terms, *ἀσυγχύτως, ἀμερίστως, ἀχωρίστως, ἀδιατρέπτως*, although, being pure negations, they say nothing positive as to the manner of that union? There are two kinds of ignorance—one concerning the being of an object, and the other concerning its character as being. The latter marks an advanced stage in relation to the former. So it is a great thing to know that in God there is an essential nature which is to be called light, though we do not know how we are to conceive of it.

That in this expression we have in general a definition of the divine essence, which is not to be limited one-sidedly to the region of His willing or of His thinking activity, is confirmed by the progress of the apostolical discussion. That is to say, when it speaks of a *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί* in us, that points rather to the exhibition of the nature by act, and therefore to the will; when it speaks of the *ὁμολογία τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν* as required, that points rather to the domain of the thinking. To make it more plain, however, the negative is added to the positive declaration, *καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία*. First, it must be observed that this sentence is, as to its form, distinguished as well from *Θεὸς φῶς* as from *Θεὸς ἐν τῷ φωτὶ ἔστιν*. To the former would have corresponded accurately *οὐκ ἔστιν σκοτία*, He is light and not darkness; it is clear, however, that this would have been far less pregnant than the expression selected by St. John. To the latter would have corresponded *οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ*. But this idea would be a harsh one, since it is obvious that the self-revelation of God before Himself, His garment—for this is meant by *εἶναι ἐν*—must correspond with His inmost essence; and it was necessary therefore to deny, not that in it, but that in God, there is any darkness. The form *οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ* would not have been parallel with *Θεὸς φῶς*, which, however, it would be supposed to be. Generally speaking, to God as *φῶς* there is no counterpart nature which in a similar way would be the sum of all *σκοτία*: not Satan; for though he is indeed *ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ*, and *ἄρχων* of the kingdom of darkness, he is not the epitome of darkness, so that there is no darkness outside of him; while all light

dwells and has its source in God, and is derived from Him, and wrapped up in Him, the *σκοτία* comes to realization only in the community of collective persons who are *ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ*; darkness, as a whole, is only an ideal, and not a concrete unity. For the rest, that the positive expression *Θεὸς φῶς* is followed by the negative one, has its reason—apart from the tendency of St. John to move by preference in antitheses—in the consideration that follows: because, to wit, the purport of the teaching is to make it emphatic that the slightest fellowship with darkness excludes fellowship with God, as God has no darkness in Himself, but is light, and only light.

Verse 6.

Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα, καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

It is obvious at once that the following verses aim to deduce the consequences which flow from the nature of God being light; and further, that these consequences are twofold, each of the two being again unfolded into two counterpart sentences. But, before we exhibit the thoughts in their clear connection, it is important here also to define the ideas that constitute the whole. The first consequence is, that we should walk in the light; the second, that we must ever remain conscious of our sin. What is meant by *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί*? At the very outset we see the incorrectness of the common explanation of *φῶς* by holiness or holy love. For, since in ver. 7 the presupposition is assumed that we walk in the light as God is in the light, there would be assumed also a holiness in us altogether corresponding to the divine holiness, which is absolute; but how in that case would such a presupposition (*ἐάν*) of absolute holiness be consistent with the necessity of a *καθαρίζεσθαι ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας*, and of a perpetual consciousness of sin? Such an explanation of the *φῶς* requires the exposition to soften down *ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν ὡς αὐτὸς ἐν φωτὶ ἔστιν* in a way that does violence to the plain meaning of the words.

Now, let us see if the interpretation we have given will help us on our way. Our starting-point is, that in our verse it is not, as in the former, *Θεὸς φῶς*, and accordingly *ἡμεῖς φῶς*, but *αὐτὸς ἐν φωτὶ ἔστιν*, and, corresponding with it, *ἡμεῖς ἐν τῷ φωτί*. We saw that *Θεὸς ἐν τῷ φωτί* defines the divine nature not in itself, but in its self-manifestation before itself, the *θεία φύσις*, as St. Peter says; in short, that it is the sphere homogeneous with His essential being. The expression, therefore, thus carried over to men, would indicate not so much the bearing and character of a being in itself, as the sphere in which he moves. In relation to God, however, it is not *ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν*, an expression which would not do justice to the divine, immutable nature, but simply *ἔστιν*. But the former expression is used of men, because the apostle is concerned with a permanent, never-resting confirmation of the *ἐν φωτὶ εἶναι*. Thus the writer is not here reflecting upon the sinning or not sinning, the holiness or the unholiness of human conduct; in fact, not upon its ethical quality at all, but purely and simply upon the sphere to which this conduct belongs. This will be made yet more plain when we carefully mark the contrast, *ἐν σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖν*. We read in the Gospel, ch. viii. 12, that he who follows the Lord "shall not walk in darkness;" and it is clear that the darkness there means *primarily* something that is round about men, even as the light there is *primarily* a sphere external to men. Similarly, in ch. iii. 19 we read that men "loved darkness rather than light, *because* their deeds were evil;" now here, while certainly there is a connection established between the light and the ethical quality of men, it is clear, on the other hand, that the Saviour distinguishes the light and the darkness themselves from the works. Now, if the light is the divine, taking it thus generally at the outset, then the darkness is the undivine or what is opposed to God,—that is, the nature turned away from God, and not directed to Him.

Hence the *σκοτία* coincides with the New Testament idea of the *κόσμος*; it is the principle which animates and governs the *κόσμος*, and which comes in it into outward

exhibition and form. Similarly, the φῶς must be the principle coming into exhibition as opposed to the κόσμος, which is represented, namely, in the βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Thus the ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν is in close affinity with the biblical idea of the μετανοία. The meaning of μετανοεῖν is the being translated or turning oneself over to the interests of the kingdom of God, instead of being, as before, rooted in the domain of the κόσμος, with all its thinking, and willing, and nature. Through the μετανοεῖν, as well as through the περιπατεῖν ἐν φωτί, a change passes upon the sphere in which the man lives, the circle of his interests, the powers with which he reckons, only that in the μετανοεῖν there is reference to the *turning to* a new sphere of life, while in the περιπατεῖν ἐν φωτί there is reference to his *belonging to it*, the latter being the consequence of the former. Ὡς ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τῷ φωτὶ ἔστιν: that is, as His self-manifestation is in harmony with and adequate to His internal divine light-nature, so should man ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν; his light-sphere should be the same with that of God. The kingdom of God is the element of his life which surrounds him, the air of which he breathes, and the breath of which encircles him with its nourishing influence.

Thus it is now perfectly clear that the idea of the ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν is by no means coincident with that of personal holiness and sinlessness. For as, in Acts xi. 38, the forgiveness of sins is represented as the consequence of the μετανοία, so in our passage the καθαρίζεσθαι ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας is represented as the consequence of the ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν. Only he who opens himself to the light, and has entered into the domain of light, can experience in himself the effects of the light. Only when the father's house sways all the thoughts of the prodigal son, and he has come back again to this sphere of his home, does the father come to meet him with the announcement of forgiveness. The kingdom of God, and its interests, its views, and its measure of all things, are to the natural man altogether sealed up and strange. But when, instead of this, he obtains an eye and a heart for these, he enters into

the sphere of light, and that light begins at once its ethical influence upon him and in him. The ethical deportment of the man is therefore a consequence of his *περιπατεῖν* in the sphere of light or of darkness respectively. But as the light by its shining reveals, according to the Gospel, the darkness as darkness, so here also the immediate result of the *ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν* is that the man perceives where in himself the darkness is, and recognises it as darkness.

The *ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν* is, admitting all this, not, so to speak, a predominant, characteristic tendency of the human life only, a series of points of light with which may co-exist another though smaller series of points of darkness; it is rather a *thorough and perfect* characterization with which no other can co-exist. Every interruption of it, every dissolution of the once established fellowship with God, must fall under the condemnation of Heb. vi. 4. He who has once entered into this *κοινωνία τοῦ φωτός* walks now habitually in the light. But with this it is quite consistent that the sin is not, so to speak, only a thing past for him, as might be concluded from the perfect *ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν*, ver. 10; such an error is at once repelled by the parallel *ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν* in ver. 8. On the contrary, the *σάρξ* yet remains in the man as the stronghold of his sin, from which, indeed, it is not to be ejected in a magical and instantaneous manner. This only is necessary, that, as every fellowship in which we find ourselves reacts against all that is directly opposed to it, so the sphere of light to the empire of which we have become subject reacts against every such indwelling sin. Only he who should refuse to be convicted by the light, who should decline to bring all that is in him before the bar of the light, would be said again to walk *ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ*. Moreover, these individual sinful acts, the presence of which in the Christian life is admitted, and the acknowledgment of which is required, have a deep significance in relation to what constitutes belonging to the kingdom of God; for, after all, the man should not only be *ἐν τῷ φωτί*, but should also be *φῶς* itself. Now, God is first *φῶς*, and then afterwards is said to be *ἐν τῷ φωτί*; but in the case of man the order is

inverted: he must first be ἐν τῷ φωτί, in order that then, through the energy and operation of the light, he may himself become φῶς. Hence here, in the beginning of his exposition, St. John gives the former side of the question precedence, reserving the other for later development.

Let us now descend to the details. It has long since been pointed out, that from ch. i. 6 to ch. ii. 8 the apostle speaks in the form of emphatic conditional sentences; that from that point he applies the participial construction in order to express the conditional clauses: in harmony with which we have in the first chapter the verb ψεύδεσθαι, and in the second chapter the substantival form ψεύστην εἶναι. It is common to both sections that we find the genuine Johannaean habit of carrying on the process of thought through the medium of antithesis. The sixth verse takes up the idea of κοινωνία laid down in the introduction. This is fundamentally a fellowship with God; he, therefore, who will generally be a Christian—as was the case with the readers of this Epistle—must, in virtue of an internal necessity, give utterance to the avowal of such a fellowship with God. Rightly then does the apostle now lay down his proposition in the first person; for the former part of the conditional clause, ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ, is already an accomplished fact in regard to him and all his readers. Moreover, that αὐτός refers to the Father, to God Himself, follows not only from the fact that He is the immediate antecedent, but especially from the explanatory clause, ver. 7, ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί. But if, St. John continues, with this avowal there is connected a περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ σκότει, a direction of all the interests of life to the κόσμος, then we lie. Here, too, we have the first person; not in the spirit of a "modesty that would spare them," but, conversely, in the spirit of holy severity which yields itself personally up to the common judgment. The lie is evidently here the disparity between word and deed.

The second expression, however, demands special notice, οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. This expression is commonly explained as if it asserted that by our deeds we prove that

we are liars. The ψεύδεσθαι which precedes is thus supposed to be more closely defined by this, that it is made evident by works that it is so. But to signify that, the present expression would be far-fetched; on the other hand, the repetition ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν, ver. 8, as also the entire phraseology of the New Testament, point to another interpretation. When we read in John viii. 47, ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκούει μου τὴν φωνήν, and immediately before, ἐγὼ ἐλήλυθα ἵνα μαρτυρήσω τῇ ἀληθείᾳ; and further, John xiv. 6, ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια, and finally in St. Paul, τῇ ἀληθείᾳ οὐ πείθεσθαι: all these passages urge upon us a peculiar, specific, objective idea of the word ἀλήθεια. We are accustomed to regard truth as a definite relation between two things; whether the congruence between word and deed, or the congruence between nature and manifestation, or what not. In short, truth is to us an altogether relative idea, an idea of relation between two things. Now this notion does not suit, or very badly suits, the passages which have been quoted from Scripture; in them the truth is something independent and absolute. What shall we make with the relatival idea in such expressions as ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας εἶναι, τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πείθεσθαι?

It may be attempted to preserve the idea of a relation in the expression ἐγὼ ἀλήθεια, by saying that in God His actual essence and the notion of Him coincide with each other. For first, on the one hand, we should thereby separate between the notion of God and His essence, which is impossible; for the idea of Him exists only in virtue of His nature, and we should by such a course only reach the empty conclusion that God is such as He is. Secondly, on the other hand, Christ speaks this word concerning Himself, and that in relation to men; but the statement that in Him idea and reality coincide does not permit, so far as we can see, an unforced application to His relation to men. We are driven therefore to conclude that ἀλήθεια must be accepted as expressing a purely absolute and objective truth. It means the being which is absolutely filled with reality, and is substantially real;

all generally that IS, is in God pre-eminently; and what is not in God has generally no reality, no real being.

And this definition of the idea is vindicated in its right when we observe the antithesis,—that is, the ψεῦδος. The κόσμος is subjected to the father of the lie, and all its members are therefore liars; this signifies, however, that they have no true, substantial, real being, that their being has no positive substance. The κόσμος belongs to death, but God is life; as it is essential to the world to be without real being, to be nothing, so to God it is essential to have a being that is absolutely filled and satisfied. Thus, truth and life are correlative and interchangeable ideas: the former is the substance of the latter; no life would be possible without a being filling it, without a substantial reality. God is accordingly the truth, His kingdom is a kingdom of truth, because here is the seat of all substantial being, the only place where realities are to be found. The Lord came τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μαρτυρεῖν, that is, to bring demonstration in His own Person that there is a true being, the counterpart and antithesis of death; and to show in what this ἀλήθεια consists, and how it is to be manifested.

It is obvious, finally, that this notion of ἀλήθεια harmonizes well even with the common application of the word in human affairs; all untruth is mere appearance, being which has only the form of being, to which the substantial contents are lacking; but truth is the presence of a reality. This being, as perfectly and substantially full, God has absolutely and primarily: He is therefore truth. But man must first establish the reality of this truth in himself by his works. We do not, however, read τὰ ἀληθῆ οὐ ποιεῖ; for our passage does not mean to intimate that the man in question fails to exhibit in action the individual realities which lie in the collective being of God; but we read οὐ ποιεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν: his action has in it altogether nothing of the divine fulness of truth, of real and substantial being; it is directed only to semblance and death. Not only the individual outbeamings of truth, τὰ ἀληθῆ, but truth itself, conceived as one whole, is absent from his deeds.

Consequently, the meaning of the whole verse is this: If any man makes an avowal of fellowship with God, and yet the darkness, or the κόσμος, is the object to which his life and action tend (περιπατεῖ), he thereby speaks untruth, and shows that his deeds are not directed to the truth and its realization in himself. The περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί suggests the existing sphere into which the man has entered; but in the expression τὴν ἀλήθειαν ποιεῖν we have the element of personal activity; for the entering into that sphere does not come to pass without the act of man, without the direction to it of his own will.

VERSE 7.

Ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν, ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων, καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας.

The opposite case to that just assumed is introduced by a δέ: that is, the accordance between the word and the deed. But, instead of simply declaring this accordance, there is connected with it an emphatic expression of its happy results, and in such a way that a twofold progression of the thought is introduced. One advance is marked by the words κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων; this reading is undoubtedly to be preferred to that of μετ' αὐτοῦ. It is true that the exact antithesis to the previous verse would be ἐὰν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ; it is, however, altogether Johannaean not to repeat precisely the same thought, but to define it more closely at the same time, or to supplement it. In the third verse fellowship with God is brought into view only as the foundation, as the essential substance, of brotherly fellowship. So here, also, the superstructure is brought into view, the consequence of that principle, that he who is in the light is connected by a bond with the τέκνα τοῦ φωτός. The bond, however, is at this point no other than the likeness of the mutual life element: not yet brotherly love, or the reference of any action to the brethren, but the foundation of every such personal relation, the similarity and community of the same element in which we all move

alike, and in which we all alike have an interest. But that the apostle dwells first on this side of the matter, and only afterwards passes on to the καθαρίζεσθαι ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας, has its reason in this, that in the present connection he can treat of the former only ὡς ἐν παρόδῳ, in order then to go onward more specifically to another fruit of the περιπατεῖν ἐν φωτί.

This second fruit, the second new element that enters here, is embraced in the words καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ (the Χριστοῦ must be struck out) τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας. It is obvious that the life in the light—in other words, the internal direction of the whole man towards the kingdom of God — cannot but have its results as to the inner man. For, the kingdom of God is by no means an abstract notion, it is something altogether real; and thus the life that is in him is not a life merely in the sphere of dead thoughts, it is a life moved by the powers of the world to come. That this light is poured abundantly into the man has the positive effect of making him a τέκνον τοῦ φωτός: negatively expressed, that of abolishing in him the ruling power of sin.

Now this connection of thought itself shows that καθαρίζειν must not be understood of the forgiveness of sins past, but of sanctification. To the same meaning we are led by the words themselves; the cleansing from actual committed sins through forgiveness would have been expressed by καθαρίζειν ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, or something of the same kind. But πᾶσα ἁμαρτία, every sin, is much too comprehensive a word for the sins of the past; it signifies not "all our sins," but "all that is called sin." Up to this point the expression has been altogether rooted in the context, but the addition τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ κ.τ.λ. seems to introduce something quite new,—something of which the context has given no indication. We have here two questions to discuss: first, how far sanctification is ascribed to the blood of Jesus; secondly, whether this participation in the benefit of the blood of Christ is not already included in the περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί.

As to the former point, it is undoubtedly biblical doctrine that Christ in His death has borne the penalty of our sin, and therefore released us from its punishment. But the power of the blood of Christ is not limited to this. The fundamental passage as to the question is St. John's sixth chapter in the Gospel. There the drinking of the blood of Christ is presented as the means for procuring eternal life. As the shedding of that blood brought about the death of redemption, so also it rendered it possible that the blood should be an open fountain which might overflow upon others: the death of the corn of wheat illustrates its effect, that of His life passing over as a power to others. Blood and life are in the Scripture equivalent terms: where that is, there is this; for the life is in the blood, according to the language of the Old Testament. Thus, then, the *καθαρισμὸς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας* is possible only in consequence of the blood of Christ entering into our life as a new principle of life. There is absolutely no Christian sanctification imaginable which does not take place through the blood,—that is, through the Redeemer's power of life working its effects and ruling within us.

As to the second point, it is supposed that this blood has its effect only in those who walk in the light. The light is the circle within which the divine life reigns; on earth, therefore, it is the kingdom of God, the church, whose Head is Christ. But as that church has been founded only through the death of the Redeemer, and as the life of the church has its basis and principle only in His blood, he who *ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖ* by the very supposition comes into immediate contact with the influence of that blood; and if the *φῶς* has its effect upon him, that is only in connection with the constant carrying on of the work of Christ's blood upon him,—that is, in its cleansing from sin, from the corruption still clinging to the soul. Now, as the expression *αἷμα Ἰησοῦ*, according to this exposition, lies indicated in the previous expression, so has the supplemental clause *τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ* its relation also to that previous expression. As well in the third as in the sixth verse the discourse had been of fellowship with God; accordingly, it is here said that

he who comes into contact with the blood of Christ, by that very means has fellowship with God. For the man Jesus, whose blood that is, is at the same time the Son of God.

VERSE 8.

Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

After the author has, in the two previous verses, illustrated the first deduction from the *Θεὸς φῶς*, and exhibited its special blessing, he goes on in this verse to exhibit the second result with its blessing also. This second consequence, the acknowledgment of our sinfulness, has in itself a close connection with what precedes; for we saw that it is involved in the very fact of walking in the light. But the connection is made still closer by the words *καθαρίζεσθαι ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας* at the end of the foregoing verse. If the cleansing from sin is an essential element of our walking in light, so the denial of its necessity is a token of *εἶναι ἐν σκότει*. This inference is also unfolded, like the other, in two antithetical clauses, so that the eighth verse corresponds with the sixth, and the ninth verse with the seventh.

First, then, for the false position, the denial of sin. The expression *ἁμαρτίαν ἔχειν* requires consideration. It is specifically Johannaean; comp. John ix. 5, xv. 22, 24, xix. 11. Obviously it says something different from, and indeed something less than, *ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ εἶναι*. It is indeed impossible that he who abides *ἐν φωτί*, in the sphere of light, should at the same time continue *ἐν σκοτίᾳ*, in the precisely opposite sphere; but there may nevertheless be sin yet in him. Accordingly St. Paul also uses the peculiar form *ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ εἶναι* only in the passage 1 Cor. xv. 17, where he is denying absolutely any connection with God. He who denies that he has sin, would by that very fact *πλανᾶν* himself. The word occurs in no other document of the New Testament so often as in the Apocalypse. But in all the passages it is employed with a very definitely stamped meaning; never for mere error with express limitation as such, but always for fundamental departure from the truth. It occurs concern-

ing the artifices of Satan, of the Antichrist, of the beast, and once of the false teachers in Thyatira, Rev. ii. 20, whose work, however, is expressly marked by its signs as fundamental deception. In precisely the same significance is the word used in the only other passage of our Epistle where it occurs, ch. ii. 26,—that is, of the Antichrist. Finally, we find it twice in the Gospel said concerning the Lord, ch. vii. 48, but in the mouth of those who in the next chapter reproached Him with being of the devil, and therefore with the most pregnant meaning used it. Accordingly we must in our passage, too, assume that it is employed in the same sense: "If we say that we have no sin, we enter upon an altogether false course, a godless way of life;" not as if it were only that "we fall into an error." The application of the word thus found is confirmed by what follows; St. John's *πλανᾶν* is illustrated by *ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν*. As already remarked upon ver. 6, it is not the apostle's meaning that in the present matter we have not truth, but *ἡ ἀλήθεια* is the truth in the absolute sense. In such a case our whole life and being is fallen into the *πλάνη*, the empty appearance; we are lacking in any real substantial life. For, where there is even only a trace of life, and of the divine fulness, this must immediately manifest sin to be sin. Hence, where there is no consciousness of sin, there can be not even the beginning of the only true life and its rich substantial meaning.

VERSE 9.

Ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, πιστός ἐστι καὶ δίκαιος, ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας.

In the same manner as ver. 7 forms an antithesis to ver. 6, ver. 9 does to ver. 8; but here, however, also we have no mere logical contrast, but at the same time the introduction of a new element which exhibits, like ver. 7, the blessing of the right condition of the heart, of the *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί*. It is true that the antithesis to ver. 8 is not introduced, like ver. 7, by a *δέ*. On the one hand, that antithesis appears of itself sufficiently marked by its matter,

and St. John does not prefer the accumulation of particles; on the other hand, the intention is that in this manner the thought introduced should be brought forward in its own absolute significance, being presented by an asyndeton, and therefore to be considered not alone in its relation to what precedes. As, in the seventh verse, the mere assertion of a fellowship with God has not only placed against it in antithesis the actual fact of fellowship, as stated in *εἶναι ἐν τῷ φωτί*, but also this fact is, as it were, strengthened by the *περιπατεῖν*, and placed in its full intensity and active force; so in our verse the *εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν* is not only paralleled by a mere *εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν ἔχομεν*, but the whole energy of the consciousness of sin opens itself out in the *ὁμολογεῖν*.

As to the emphatic significance of this word, we may compare ch. i. 20, *καὶ ὡμολόγησεν καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσατο, καὶ ὡμολόγησεν*, where the element of earnest emphasizing and prominence which lies in the *ὁμολογεῖν* is made still more prominent through the negative expression *οὐκ ἀρνεῖσθαι*. It is not unimportant that, instead of the singular in ver. 8, *οὐκ ἔχομεν ἁμαρτίαν*, here the articulated plural comes in: the recognition and confession has not reference to sinfulness in general, but to the individual sinful actions of which I am conscious to myself. Against sin I cannot contend, and the consciousness of sinfulness in general will not conduce to an effectual repentance; I control sin only by fixing my eye keenly upon its particular outbursts and war against individual transgressions. This kind of acknowledgment of sins cannot fail of its benefit; as a response to it, God, for the sake of His justice and righteousness, forgives them all.

But what, then, is that? In the majority of passages—of the New Testament especially—where the faithfulness of God is spoken of, His fidelity to His promise is meant: that He performs what He has promised. At the first glance this seems unsuitable here; for where in the whole context has there been any reference to promise? The idea of promise must needs in that case be enlarged. Not alone by words, but also through deeds, a promise may be

given, and it is of such practical promises that it is said πιστὸς ὁ Θεός; comp. 1 Thess. v. 9, πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὃς καὶ ποιήσει, and, so far as the thing goes, though the word is not used, Phil. i. 5, πέποιθα ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει. This particular application of the πιστός would be more appropriate here; the ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν, which is manifested in the ὁμολογεῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας, is such a real beginning of the divine energy of which the final and good result must be, in the faithfulness of God, the effectual cleansing from all sin. But even this explanation has its difficulty. It is true, indeed, that the περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί and ὁμολογεῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας take place as the result of the divine action on the soul; but this view of the matter is not made prominent in our passage, and *both* are brought into consideration as *human* acts. Moreover, we are wont to speak of fidelity in yet another sense. One is true to himself when he does that which he must do according to the constitution of his whole nature. Now, here God's nature is described as φῶς only; and therefore the fidelity of God refers to His ever manifesting Himself truly as the light. Man, in the apostle's supposition, has already entered into connection with God, inasmuch as he has passed into the kingdom of light; and it belongs to the very nature of God—that is, it comports with His fidelity—that He should appear Himself as light in him who has come near to Him, and that by destroying and taking away his sin.

Again, He shows Himself, in the forgiveness of sins, δίκαιος, righteous. This idea occurs in St. John with the same two meanings which we attach to our word "right;" one, that is, signifying the rectitude of the judge who judges according to the evidence, the other signifying the rectitude of the judged who answers to the standard applied to him, who therefore in this case is holy and sinless. The former is the meaning in almost all the passages of the Apocalypse, not only ch. xvi. 5, 7, xix. 2, but also ch. xv. 3, where the connection leads directly to the same signification; with which compare also John v. 30, vii. 24, both confirming this. In the second meaning, that of holiness, it occurs in ch.

ii. 29, iii. 12 of our Epistle, as also in Rev. xxii. 11 and John xvii. 25, where the sense is not that the Father must, in His judicial capacity, hear the Son's request,—for in that case the address to the Father must belong to the preceding verse,—but that He as the Holy One, withdrawn from all sin, cannot be effectually known by the world, save only by the Son. These two interpretations, however, do not lie wide apart; because God is in possession of immanent, objective righteousness, therefore He can exercise the transitive and subjective righteousness of the judge; this latter is only the outgoing of the former. This reconciliation or synthesis of the two meanings must be maintained if we would understand the δίκαιος of our passage. On the one hand, that is, the transitive righteousness of God is exhibited in its true character when sin is forgiven, this being certainly an act of the judge: He could forgive no sin if His righteousness, and not His grace only, did not require it. But, on the other hand, the immanent righteousness comes also to its rights; God as the light cannot be otherwise than such towards those who stand in a true relation to the light; He cannot regard them as ἐν σκοτίᾳ περιπατοῦντες. In other words, he who knows and acknowledges his sin has in fact separated himself inwardly from it: hence the transitive or subjective righteousness of God requires, that is, His judicial function demands, that He should in fact, by His pronounced sentence, acknowledge this internal separation. Further, as He is in Himself in an immanent sense righteous, God approves Himself holy towards the sinner, inasmuch as He, by virtue of His own holiness, effectually takes away the sin that is still present in him, imparting instead a portion of His own perfection. With all this correspond the two following predicatives, the ἀφιέναι τὰς ἁμαρτίας and the καθαρίζειν ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας: the former refers to the *actus forensis*, the latter to the renewal of the nature in virtue of the δικαιοσύνη indwelling in him.

Thus the meaning of the supplementary clause is this: by πιστός it is said primarily and generally that God, in the forgiveness of sins, approves Himself faithful to His

own nature, which is light; then by δίκαιος it is more specifically said under what aspect this fidelity shows itself. But in the previous discussion we have evidently laid ourselves open to the charge of inexactness, inasmuch as we have treated the passage as if it had been δίκαιός ἐστι τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφιεὶς καὶ καθαρίζων κ.τ.λ. But the apostle's phrase, instead of that, moves in a telic clause, or "in order that." It has been attempted to rob the sentence of its strange peculiarity by interpreting the ἵνα as ecbatic, as if it were ὥστε. It is undoubtedly true that with the decline of a language there is frequently a marked enfeebling of its conjunctions; and as to ἵνα in particular, looked at philologically, a multitude of examples have been adduced from later Greek, especially from Plutarch. But, in the first place, these examples from classical Greek require a very careful sifting, for there are not a few among them which show that by the exhibition of the consequence as if it were a design, a certain effect is attained and a precision intentionally introduced into the thought (as, for example, in Plutarch, *Moral.* p. 333 A); and, secondly, there is need of doubly careful sifting in the Scripture, where from the very beginning much is viewed as design which to our apprehension is primarily only consequence or result. We have only to think of the hardening of Pharaoh, which is referred to as the purpose of God; and yet more appropriately, Matt. xiii. 15. The thought is, as in all such cases, only weakened if we do not hold fast the reference to design or purpose. Assuredly the righteousness and fidelity is grounded in His inmost nature, and both attributes belong to Him apart from every possible demonstration of them in act, and every purpose outside of Himself to which they refer. But as all that He has, and not only so, but also all that He is, He gives to the Son, so that He places all, so to speak, at His Son's service, so all is absolutely and entirely devoted to the service of man. The whole fulness of His unfathomable essence is turned to nothing else but the salvation of His creatures, so that it is to Him only the means, yea, His very self is only the means, to effect His creatures' happiness and good. As a

friend has lived for his friend when his whole life has had his friend's wellbeing for its aim, so God makes the whole πλήρωμα αὐτοῦ into the means for bringing us to our salvation. It is a deduction from the sentence Θεὸς ἀγάπη that He refers His whole nature only to others, whether to His own Son or to the creature. His fidelity, His righteousness, and in like manner all His other perfections, are for Him existent, only to be applied to His creatures' benefit, to our salvation. Here is the impressive thought which lies in the ἵνα. In this one particle lies the most comprehensive and the highest witness of the power of His love that it is possible to conceive. For the rest, whether we are to read at the close of the verse καθαρίζῃ or καθαρίζει, is irrelevant to the sense; even in the latter case the καθαρίζει must be in fact parallel with ἀφῇ, and the form is only after the Hebrew manner released from strict grammatical symmetry.

Verse 10.

Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν, ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν, καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

With the ninth verse the author has developed his thought in a logically clear and precise manner. The two deductions which he has drawn from the Θεὸς φῶς in relation to the Christian life have been plainly exhibited, each in an antithetical form. Returning now once more to the idea already touched in ver. 8, that self-justification excludes from the kingdom of God, it is evident that he has no logical interest in doing so, but is moved by purely practical reasons, and aims only at edification. In fact, as the whole letter is directed to Christians, as such, members of the kingdom of God, it was important for the apostle to lay the utmost stress upon what was the fundamental condition of this, the acknowledgment of sin. Hence the resumption of the subject now before us. Not, indeed, that this resumption is at all tautological; the idea is so ordered that, in harmony with the very solemn purpose of the verse, its characteristics are more keen and more penetrating than in ver. 8. We would not, indeed, lay

stress on the ἁμαρτάνειν being used instead of the ἔχειν ἁμαρτίαν above. The former refers rather to individual sinful acts, and the latter to sinfulness in general; and that the former is here selected has its reason probably in the τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὁμολογεῖν of ver. 9, which also referred, of course, to individual sinful acts. But as to matter of fact, this can hardly be of much significance here. The pith of the verse obviously lies rather in the words ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτόν. Till now, the verbs ψεύδεσθαι and πλανᾶν had been used only to make prominent the sin which we ourselves in our own person bring upon ourselves by a false condition of our hearts. Here the emphasis is laid upon a much heavier sin into which we fall: we make God Himself a sinner. So blasphemous is the denial of our sinfulness that we thereby degrade God, who is the φῶς and ἀλήθεια, into the domain of darkness and the lie. And here we have not to think only of the fact that God expressly declares in the utterances of the Old and New Testament Scriptures the sinfulness of man, and therefore that we make the Scripture, the word of God which οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι, lie to us. All the spiritual institutions of the divine economy, the ἀφιέναι τὰς ἁμαρτίας, the καθαρίζειν ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, His entire government and work upon earth, yea, the whole manifestation of the Son of God, which was based upon the presupposition of human sin, is reduced to one comprehensive lie.

And thereby all possible fellowship with Him is broken off: ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν. That the λόγος Θεοῦ here does not mean the personal Logos, the Son of God, is plain enough if we consider that in the preceding context nothing had been said of any indwelling of the Son in us. Nor must we regard the sayings of the Old Testament as intended by the words; for not only is there nothing here to suggest such an allusion, but it is a fact that the apostle in this Epistle generally refers very little to the Old Testament, so that the Epistle in this respect is in a certain contrast with the Gospel and the Apocalypse, which are pervaded with formal allusions to the ancient Scriptures. But then, again, we are not to think of specific

sayings of Christ, as if λόγος αὐτοῦ were simply equivalent to ῥήματα αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν: that would mean only that we observe not His commandments, or that they do not dwell in us. The λόγος means to say more than the mere ῥήματα would say. We must be guided by such passages as John viii. 31: ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μένητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταί μου ἐστε; or John v. 38: τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ ἔχειν μένοντα ἐν αὐτῷ; or, so far as the analogy of the matter goes without the word, John vi. 63: τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λαλῶ ὑμῖν πνεῦμα καὶ ζωή. As in all these places, so here also, ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ is the aggregate collective internal unity of the entire divine announcement; not, indeed, as to the external words, but these words as they are spirit and life, as a power laying fast hold upon men. The words of God, as they have been revealed in the incarnate Logos, are the divine ἀλήθεια comprehended in a definite form. Thus what was said above, ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν, corresponds to our expression, ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν; only that this latter specifies, instead of the purely objective idea of the truth, the means whereby that absolute truth is implanted in our nature.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1.

Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν, ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε· καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον.

The first two verses of this new chapter are strictly connected with the preceding. The *ταῦτα* at the outset shows that. On a first glance, the *μὴ ἁμαρτάνειν*, our not sinning at all, would not seem to be directly prepared for by anything in the previous chapter. It is true that the second clause of our verse, *ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ, παράκλητον ἔχομεν*, is founded on what the other chapter says as to man, and even the Christian man, being still sinful; but that is not the case with the first clause, *ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε*. And yet it appears as if precisely that second clause is introduced as a new thought; for it does not stand in connection with what precedes by *ἵνα*, as a resumption of it with *ταῦτα*. On the other hand, the first clause is actually placed by *ἵνα* in telic connection with what precedes, which, however, does not appear to afford any reason for such connection. When we look more closely into the matter it takes a different turn. The first statement on which the apostle laid emphasis was this, that we must walk in light, and that its consequence would be the blessing that, so walking, the Lord would cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Thus the cleansing from sin—and that we have seen to comprehend not only the atoning, but specifically the delivering power of Christ, the abolition of sin in us—constitutes the consequence of the *ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν*: it is therefore also at the same time the end for the sake of which St. John exhorts to a walk in light. Thus, in fact, he has a right to lay it down as the goal of his statements in vers. 6

and 7 of the previous chapter that we should not sin, that sin should cease to be a power within us. Thus the *ταῦτα* is primarily a resumption of these verses. But, further, he has taught in the last three verses of that chapter that sin still remains even in the Christian; that the purifying energy of Jesus Christ is not consummated at one stroke; that fellowship with the kingdom of light does not immediately make a man himself light. Thus what the apostle, in the words *ταῦτα γράφω ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε*, surveys in a single glance, is really the result of continuous effort, a process filling the whole life of the man. It is to this second aspect of the matter, as made prominent in the former chapter, that the second half of our ver. 1 refers. Moreover, the paracletic work of Christ, the *ἱλασμός*, which is wrapped up in it, also refers back to the former chapter, —that is, to the mention of the *αἷμα Ἰησοῦ* in ver. 7. Hence we are justified, so far as the matter of the words goes, to include the first two verses of ch. ii. under the *ἵνα*, and accordingly to sum up under the *ταῦτα* the whole substance of ch. i. 5–10. The fact that *ἵνα* does not formally stretch to the second clause of the first verse, is to be accounted for by the particular form the apostle has given to his thought. It was indeed impossible to write *ταῦτα γράφω ἵνα παράκλητον ἔχωμεν*; for the *παράκλητον ἔχειν* is not the end of the Epistle, as that goes on independently of anything the apostle or man may do: his aim in writing is only that we may *know* that we have a Paraclete. He might therefore have written *ταῦτα γράφομεν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι παράκλητον ἔχομεν*. But the Gospel has given us abundant evidence how constantly the apostle thinks in the Hebrew style, by co-ordinating thoughts, and not in the Greek style, by subordinating them one to another. Thus, as in ch. i. 9 —the reading *καθαρίζει* being otherwise established—the close of the verse is formally sundered from the preceding telic clause and becomes an independent sentence, precisely so it is here. And here with all the more propriety, because the thought expressed in ch. i. 6 finds a more full elucidation in ver. 2, and thus assumes or lays claim to a certain independence. Thus, if we have discerned the reference of

the ταῦτα to all that precedes, and therewith, at the same time, the connection of the following verses, we shall not be in any doubt as to their actual significance, as to the reason why they are added. In the previous chapter the apostle had spoken objectively, he had announced simple facts; but the last verse came in with a hortatory meaning, and for practical reasons. These two verses of the new chapter now give *ex professo* the subjective application of what had been said, the practical aim which those objective declarations should subserve. Accordingly there follows here, and that for the first time, the direct address to the readers; and the diminutive form of this address, τεκνία, shows how full the apostle's heart is, and with what ardour he pours out this exhortation.

Looking now more closely into the thoughts of the verse before us, we are immediately struck by the collocation of its two leading ideas. That is to say, while the apostle first exhibits their ceasing from sin as the essential aim of his words, he yet seems to take away from his exhortation its very nerve by straightway supposing it not to be followed. Notwithstanding this, we must be on our guard against explaining it, as it were, thus: "but if ye, *despite of this*, should fall into sin," for the words italicized are not there. It would be equally a mistake to understand in the first ἁμαρτάνειν a περιπατεῖν or a μένειν ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, and to make the meaning of the second mere sins of infirmity. What shadow of justification would there be for that, when the expressions are identical, the same words being used also in the same sentence? In both cases the same kind of ἁμαρτία must be intended. It is better to say that the apostle specifies two different ways of being delivered from sin: one, that of doing no sin at all, in the phrase ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε; and then the other, that any such sins as might nevertheless remain may be done away by forgiveness. The circumstance that these are conjoined as they are, so that the former comes first and the latter last, may be explained by this, that if the forgiveness had been placed first, the result might have been a rash and unthinking reliance upon the grace that freely pardons. That the two kinds

were placed together at all was demanded by what preceded.

The first thought had been this, that the Christian enjoys sanctifying fellowship with the light: whence followed the exhortation, Let sin cease entirely in your case. The second thought was, that the Christian still sins: whence followed the encouragement, Let the sins you have done obtain their forgiveness. Thus the ἁμαρτάνειν refers in both cases to the sins of believers, and therefore, if you will, to sins of infirmity. Most supremely must we be on our guard against them, for they easily lead to the περιπατεῖν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ. But the consciousness of this danger might very well lead to despair, and therefore the reminder that we have in the Lord Jesus a Representative and Propitiation, who as such secures the forgiveness of sins; of the two exhortations which result from the preceding,—not to sin, and to secure forgiveness for any sin that may arise,—it is only the former that the apostle urges in the form of exhortation; the latter he changes into the more needful tone of encouragement. And this gives us a new reason, the most real one, why the apostle, instead of going on with the ἵνα, so expressly shapes the second part into an independent sentence.

The consolation which he would impart consists in this, that Christ is our παράκλητος πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. Of the two meanings which have been assigned to the word παράκλητος, Comforter and Advocate,—the former in the sense of παρακαλῶν, the latter in that of παρακληθείς,—most decidedly the second is the only one admissible here; it alone answers to the passive form of the word, and the explicit use of the term in classical Greek. Now as, apart from these reasons, it is inappropriate to assume that in the same author, in the same general period of his writing, and especially in the case of an idea so very important, the same word has two distinct meanings, our passage must be regarded as shedding some light upon the passages in the Gospel where the word occurs. It is true that there it is the Holy Ghost that is spoken of, while here it is the Son; but apart from the fact that in John xiv. 16 the Holy

Ghost is mentioned as ἄλλος παράκλητος, which indirectly at least calls the Lord a παράκλητος also, the difference is only an apparent one; for the Holy Ghost is in the New Testament the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, the Lord is our Paraclete,—that is, not as it were *with* the Father, for the accusative must have its rights, as meaning over against or towards the Father. His advocacy turns towards the Father, and has to do with Him; while, on the other hand, He is, according to the Gospel, ἐν ἡμῖν, our Paraclete, inasmuch as He stands by the side of the Christian, in all his conflict with the world and himself, as his Counsellor, and Advocate, and Helper. But as towards God, who is light and a righteous Judge, the Lord can be regarded as a merciful Mediator only under a twofold presupposition: first, He must Himself be well pleasing to God through His moral qualification; secondly, He must represent a cause which may commend itself to God as the Righteous One. The first element is in our verse made prominent by the predicate δίκαιος; the second verse brings out the second element. The two united cannot be more tersely and precisely expressed than in the words of Calvin: "Justum et propitiationem vocat Christum; utroque praeditum esse oportet, ut *munus personamque* advocati sustineat, quis enim peccator nobis Dei gratiam conciliet?" Hence it is not to be overlooked that we read, not παράκλητον δίκαιον ἔχομεν, but παράκλητον ἔχομεν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον. The former statement would indeed mean that His agency as a Paraclete was a righteous one, that He is righteous in His proper function as a Paraclete, as Beda expresses it, "Patronus justus caussas injustas non accipit;" but it is not until the second verse that that element comes out. The order in the apostle's own words gives prominence first to the righteousness of the Person; by reason of which He is fitted generally, as over against God, to assume the part of a Mediator.

VERSE 2.

Καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστι περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν· οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.

But there is a second condition which must be met if a successful intervention with God shall take place: the question or case advocated must be in conformity with the divine righteousness. The second verse shows us that this is the case, and how: not in itself is our cause righteous, for the question is of sinners and sins; but because the Lord Himself has taken away their unrighteousness. *Καὶ αὐτὸς*, the apostle writes, *ἱλασμός ἐστιν*. Certainly, the *καὶ αὐτός* must not be taken in the Latin meaning of *et ipse*, as if it meant that the very same who is an advocate has at the same time set right our cause; for the *καί* serves here only for the simple connection of the two sentences. That idea, however, which we have discussed is in itself sound enough; for the mere *αὐτός*, without the appendage of a *καί* belonging to it, itself asserts that concerning the previous subject a second and new predicate is to be affirmed. This new element is the idea of *ἱλασμός*. As the words *καταλλάσσειν* and *καταλλαγή* occur only in St. Paul's writings, and not often in them, so *ἱλασμός* is peculiar to St. John, and in his writings only twice occurs, here and ch. iv. 10. The two ideas are not identical.

Καταλλάσσειν means, to wit, that God and the world are reconciled with each other; the relation of the two is always understood in the word. It is not otherwise when St. Paul uses it of human relations, as that of marriage, in 1 Cor. vii. 11, and such we find it in its reference to the death of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 16, *καταλλάξας ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ*, and ver. 20, *καταλλάγητε* [*ὑμεῖς*] *τῷ Θεῷ*, and Rom. v. 10, *κατηλλάγημεν* [*ἡμεῖς*] *τῷ Θεῷ*. The same may be said of the *decompositum* *ἀποκαταλλάσσω*. Whether the *ἀπό* here means a perfect reconciliation, or a renewed reconciliation, or a reconciliation which brings back out of estrangement, in any case the reconciliation in Col. i. 20 and 21 is, as in Eph. ii. 16, that of mankind with God, the opposition between the two parties being abolished. Even if, which we do not believe, a reconciliation of two portions of mankind with each other is spoken of in Eph. ii. 16, our assertion would still hold good, for the verb

would have reference to the relation between two separate beings or parties.

On the other hand, ἱλασμός keeps in view the reconciliation of God with Himself; it does not therefore refer to the relation of two to each other, but to the relation of one nature to itself. It expresses the overcoming of the divine wrath, or its being brought into harmony or understanding with the divine love; and thus it is the reconciliation of these two characteristics of the *interior* divine nature which had been brought into collision by human sin. Ἱλασμός is, indeed, according to the form of the word, that by means of which any one is made favourable or ἵλεως, and thus it is the *propitiation*, while καταλλαγή is the *reconciliation* which has taken place in consequence of the propitiation or atonement, which has, in fact, been rendered possible by that atonement. The atonement or propitiation applies only to the one party, the offended; the reconciliation takes place between the two parties. Thus it comes to pass, that while indeed ἱλάσκεσθαι may have things for its object (Heb. ii. 17, τὰς ἁμαρτίας once), for there is an expiation or atonement of sins, the κατάλλασσειν can never be referred to things as its object, for only personal beings can be reconciled.

Now, as it regards our passage in particular, it is first of all essential to inquire if there is any sacrificial idea involved in the ἱλασμός. Certainly it is currently used in the Septuagint in passages where there is no allusion to sacrifices; as, for example, in Ps. cxxxiv. it is the translation of the Hebrew סְלִיחָה. But when we mark, on the other hand, that ἱλάσκεσθαι is the standing translation of כִּפֶּר, and that ἱλασμός is the specific translation of כִּפֻּרִים, we must decide in favour of the sacrificial element. It is true that כִּפֶּר itself occurs in many passages without any expressed reference to a sacrifice (Ps. lxv. 4, lxxviii. 38, lxxix. 9); but always it is the sacrifice which is the means, whether expressed or not, through which, according to the Old Testament point of view, the covering of human sin is effected. But more: it has not been proved that the substantive כִּפֻּרִים, which precisely corresponds to our ἱλασμός,

ever occurs without an express reference to sacrifice; rather is the idea so closely associated with the sacrificial offering, that כִּפּוּרִים is the standing term for the great day of atonement. Now, when we add to this that in Heb. ii. 17 *ἱλάσκεσθαι*, on the only occasion when it is used, is brought in precisely at the point when for the first time the high-priesthood of Christ is mentioned, and remember also that the ancient high priest had, specially on the יוֹם כִּפּוּרִים, the function which made him the type of Christ; and observe further that the substantive *ἱλαστήριον*, derived from the same root, is in the New Testament (Rom. iii. 25, and Heb. ix. 5), as in the Septuagint, the current reproduction of the mercy-seat or כַּפֹּרֶת, which in that high-priestly sacrificial day occupied so prominent and central a place, and by its very name at least alluded to that mercy-seat,—then shall we feel inclined to take the expression *ἱλασμός* in our passage also as connected with the sacrificial institute generally, and with the great sacrificial offering of the day of atonement in particular.

In accordance with this, the *ἱλασμός* is the expiation, inasmuch as it was wrought and perfected by our great High Priest on the New Testament day of atonement by the sacrifice of Himself. We do not mean that the expression *ἱλασμός of itself* signifies that sacrifice: it points only to the atonement or propitiation accomplished by its means. But this is what we maintain: כִּפּוּרִים has a sacrificial meaning; *ἱλασμός* was the apostle's designed and chosen translation of that word. The whole New Testament beholds in the death of Christ the antitype of the great day of atonement, and the great central sacrifice of that day. Hence St. John did actually, in the use of this in itself broader word *ἱλασμός*, think precisely and only of that sacrifice.

And it is in precise and striking harmony with this that in our present passage the apostle says that the *ἱλασμός* had reference not only to our sins, the sins of believers, but also to the sins of the whole world. As in the classical passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews special stress is laid upon the fact that, in contrast with the yearly renewed

sacrifices of the old economy, Christ presented His sacrifice once for all; so in this passage stress is laid upon the fact that the virtue of His oblation extends, not, like the old offerings, merely to the covenant people, but to the whole world of mankind, having efficacy for all alike, believers as well as unbelievers. Thus this universal dictum not only furnishes a most befitting conclusion for the first section of our Epistle, but also the consolation or encouragement, which it is the apostle's desire to afford to those who still feel the weight of sin, is carried to its highest point. For, if all sins are expiated or atoned for, how were it possible that their sins should not be included in the propitiation, who, as ἐν φωτὶ περιπατοῦντες, have, as it were, the first right to stand in the closest connection with the Saviour and His atoning work?

Here we may perceive the right answer to the question why Christ is here termed not ἱλαστήρ, but ἱλασμός. For this reason, namely, because it was not the object to lay stress upon the fact that He was the true High Priest, but that He was that true high-priestly offering in virtue of which sin is expiated. Moreover, the construction of ἱλασμός with περί is in strict correspondence with the Hebrew, where עַל or בְּעַד is used with the meaning *de* or concerning.

A little above, we said in passing that the ὅλος κόσμος, for which Christ is the propitiation, is to be understood of the world in the widest sense, all unbelievers included. It is well known that many from predestinarian prepossessions have sought to restrict the compass of the word to those who should obtain actual participation in the benefits of redemption. But, not to mention the arbitrariness of any such enfeebling of the words, their hortatory and encouraging purport, as we have shown above, pleads against such an interpretation. "Quam late patet peccatum, tam late propitiatio." Through the ἱλασμός of Christ all sin and the sins of all are atoned for; if the salvation of all does not take effect, the fault is not that God will not forgive the sins of any one, but that the unforgiven sinner repels the fatherly heart that moves towards him in mercy.

Verses 3–11.

The exposition of the following verses depends very much on our clear perception of their relation to what precedes. The first thing that helps us to understand that is the verb *ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν* in the third verse. Unless we assume that this idea enters here without any link of connection, and so leave a yawning chasm between ver. 3 and what goes before,—which, indeed, the *καί*, linking the two portions together, would not allow,—we must find in what we have just been studying an idea of which the development is this *γινώσκειν αὐτόν*. Now, to get a clearer notion of what it is, we must first of all define who is meant by the *αὐτός*, God or Christ. Certainly it cannot be other than the same person who in the second part of the verse is again described by *αὐτός*: *ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν*. Now, as in all that follows God is invariably the source of command, and Christ is introduced only as the pattern we must imitate in obeying His commandments; as, besides this, Christ is distinguished as *ἐκεῖνος* from Him who is marked out by *αὐτός*,—it will appear that *αὐτός* here can be only God the Father. But then, in that case, the *γινώσκειν αὐτόν* cannot attach itself to vers. 1 and 2; for they contain no element that enters into the knowledge of the Father, while they point to the knowledge of Christ if to any knowledge at all. We may suppose, perhaps, that the train of thought which begins with ver. 3 is a continuation of the passage, ch. i. 8–10: he who walks in the light must first of all confess his sins, and, secondly, keep the divine commandments. But that is made simply impossible by ch. ii. 1, 2. We have seen that these two verses sum up by way of recapitulation the whole contents of ch. i. 6–10; and consequently ver. 3, when it begins again, must be the continuation of this *whole* section. But that, after a resuming summary of the whole, the thought should recur to one particular part, and rest upon it without actually and expressly mentioning what, is hardly to be supposed.

If, however, we ask to what *γινώσκειν τὸν Θεόν* may positively be referred, ver. 5 of the previous chapter points

the way; for it tells us expressly that God is light; and the most obvious explanation of the idea in our passage is, accordingly, that to know God is to know His nature of light, to know Him as light. Then, in that case, ver. 3 would immediately join on to ch. i. 5, and introduce a new second section which runs parallel with the entire section from ch. i. 6 to ch. ii. 2. The construction of the whole, to which we have thus been guided by the idea of *γινώσκειν τὸν Θεόν*, would receive its strong confirmation from the ninth verse; for it is clear that the clause *ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστίν* corresponds precisely to the sentence in ch. i. 6. But this evidence is effectual only on the supposition of its having been already proved that ch. ii. 9 is part of the section begun with ver. 3, and that this section therefore does not end with the sixth verse. Such proof, however, requires us to point out and establish that the *ἐντολαὶ Θεοῦ*, ver. 3, the *λόγος Θεοῦ*, ver. 5, the *περιπατεῖν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν*, and the commandment of brotherly love, ver. 9, have substantially the same meaning. It is in favour of this that, if we make the section end with ver. 6, the clause concerning brotherly love is absolutely wanting in any, whether external or internal, connection with what goes before. Without that link the reader would not by any means have understood the seventh and the eighth verses concerning the old and the new commandment; for the previous verses, which on this supposition speak of sanctification in quite general terms, furnish no point of help to the interpretation. But if we suppose that the apostle, from ver. 3 to ver. 6, has already the commandment of brotherly love in his eye, the readers are already put in a right position to perceive the meaning in which he speaks of an old and of a new commandment. In fact, they might at once have perceived, from the whole tenor of the paragraph from ver. 3 to ver. 6, that brotherly love was the subject treated. True it is that the first expression, *τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, is quite general, and signifies obedience to the will of God in all directions and in all the particulars of obedience. But then the following *τηρεῖν τὸν λόγον*

αὐτοῦ reduces back the universality of that first expression to its unity again, as we saw, indeed, already in ch. i. 10 that the meaning of the latter sentence is, that the full manifoldness of the words and teaching of our Lord is summed up in one living and life-giving unity. But those who are acquainted with St. John's Gospel, as these readers were, know at once that this unity is nowhere else to be sought but in the commandment of love.

What thus in the word λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ lies wrapped up as a germ is clearly unfolded in the words ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ τετελείωται of the following clause; if, indeed, we can suppose from other considerations that ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ here means the love which we have to Him. Certainly there are some other reasons for adopting the inverted sense of the expression: the love of God to us. First, there is the parallel clause that forms the pendant and sequel of the fourth verse. Then the result of disobedience to the divine commandments is declared to be the inference, ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν; and we have seen in the interpretation of the preceding chapter that ἀλήθεια means the real fulness of the divine nature. Hence it commends itself to our feeling, that in the fifth verse there is found a parallel thought: if we keep the commandments of God, His love is in us in a perfected sense, analogous to His ἀλήθεια being in us. Again, when we compare other passages, such as ch. iv. 10, ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν αὐτὸν ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, and such as 2 Tim. ii. 19, where it is specified as the seal of belonging to God that He knows us, not that we know Him, then in our passage also, thus looked at, the subjective genitive becomes probable, as in the interpretation: "the love of God to us." Nevertheless, there are equally strong reasons for taking it as the *genitivus objectivus*, or our love to God. For we have from ch. i. 6 to ch. ii. 11 a number of conditional sentences, the conclusion of which in every case exhibits the blessing attached to a right posture of heart required in those conditions; but in every case it is a blessing which we receive for *use* and application, not only for enjoyment. So it is when it is said, ἡ ἀλήθειά

ἐστιν ἐν ἡμῖν, or the purification from sin is ascribed to us. The same should we expect here also. But the meaning of God's love *to us* does not harmonize with this; for that is indeed an experience or enjoyment of which we are partakers, but not something with which we can operate, and of which we can make any use. Further, the love of God to us is a thought which in the present context is by no means brought into prominence, but would enter here as an abrupt and isolated idea. If, then, on the one side there are the strongest reasons for taking Θεοῦ as a *genitivus subjectivus*, and on the other side equally strong reasons for understanding something to be spoken of that we receive for use and application in ourselves, how are we to decide between them? The materials for decision are presented to us in the text. It is purely arbitrary for one half of the expositors to speak of God's love *to us*, and the other half to speak of our love *to God:* we read nothing but ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ,—that is, the divine love, love as it is in God, without the addition of any object for that love. The right meaning has escaped them simply through the interjection of an object for the love. The apostle says that he who keeps the commandment of God—that is, the commandment of love—has the love of God, has love as God is love, and as it is in God, dwelling and ruling within him as a power of life. As in the former passage the truth, which God is and which God has, comes upon us as a power filling and penetrating our being; so here the love of God, which He is and which He has, attains in us its perfected sway. He who keeps the divine commandment, the apostle means, has in himself the love from which God's commandment flows, and which is in God. Thus the preceding λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is, in the conclusion of the fifth verse, more closely defined; the reader receives into himself the idea of love.

St. John takes one step further towards his end in the sixth verse, in the requirement of περιπατεῖν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν. Looked at on one side, the word περιπατεῖν contains an enlargement of the τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς, τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ. We have seen—that is, on ch. i. 6—how περιπατεῖν denotes the whole complex movement of life,

not only in the outward act, but in the collective expression of it, inward as well as outward; and therefore in this closer definition the τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς must embrace not a greater or less number of individual acts, but the essential habit of the entire life. On the other side, the addition καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν gives another and additional point to the previous thought. As the ἐντολαὶ Θεοῦ, ordered πολυτρόπως καὶ πολυμερῶς, find their *ideal* unity in the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, in the annunciation of Christ, which forms one living whole; so the *real*, visible, concrete unity is found in the life of Jesus Christ itself. But the question how He walked is answered in the whole Gospel. In John xiii. 1, His entire life is gathered up in one word: Ἰησοῦς ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους ἠγάπησεν εἰς τέλος. Now, then, at last in ver. 9 the apostle's thought, to which he had been converging in ever-narrowing circles, bursts into clear expression: he is treating of brotherly love.

If it has been established in detail that the four expressions now considered have as to their matter the same substantial meaning; that the apostle has before his eyes in the first and most general of them, αἱ ἐντολαὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, the last and most special of them, and aims to bring the reader only by degrees to the unity and central point of these ἐντολαί; and thus that ver. 9 forms the pith of the whole discussion,—then it has been demonstrated that we must not think of separating vers. 3–6 from what follows, but must make the whole from ver. 3 to ver. 11 one connected whole. Again, as not only the expression ἐγνωκέναι τὸν Θεόν points back to ch. i. 5, as we have seen, but also ver. 9 stands in express dependence on ch. i. 5, and is parallel with ch. i. 6, it is further demonstrated that the section ch. ii. 3–11 runs strictly parallel with the section ch. i. 6–ch. ii. 2. As we have further perceived that the contents of the new section are simply brotherly love, we have already half found the mutual relation of the two main divisions of our Epistle which we now have in hand. The subject of the first section, ch. i. 6–ch. ii. 2, may be briefly stated to be the relation of man to God. He who walks in the light, says the apostle, receives the purification

from sins on the one hand through deliverance from them, ch. i. 7*b*, and ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε, ch. ii. 1; on the other hand, he receives that purification through forgiveness of the sins still committed by him, ch. i. 9, ii. 2. The new section treats of the relation of the Christian not to God, but to the brethren: he who walks in the light must love the brethren. Thus the first two sections of the Epistle strictly correspond with the purpose which, according to ch. i. 3, the apostle had in view in his first announcement: the assertion and proof of the κοινωνία: first, μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ; and then, secondly, μετ' ἀλλήλων. The former end is kept in view in ch. i. 6–ch. ii. 2; the latter, in ch. ii. 3–11.

This second section of the Epistle in its construction answers almost exactly to that of the first. Both are complete in two sub-sections: the first, ch. i. 6, 7, and ch. i. 8–10, if we leave apart for a moment the hortatory summing up in ch. ii. 1, 2; the second, ch. ii. 3–5 and ch. ii. 6–11. There is a difference indeed in the detail: the former section in the first chapter treats its subject in the form of antithesis; while the second, in the second chapter, places a superscription before each topic, or, to put it better, there is a statement of the subject placed before each. Its first general sub-section, which in a certain sense lays the foundation, ch. ii. 3–5, has ver. 3 for its statement of contents; the second and more special sub-section, ch. ii. 6–11, has vers. 6–8 for its heading. But then the most perfect similarity returns again in the two chapters; for the proper development takes place still in antithesis, of which each particular sentence is not indeed here formally a conditional one, but yet is really such, inasmuch as the participial sentences have essentially a conditional meaning. And the conformity in the structure may be traced still further. As in the first chapter the first sub-section, vers. 6, 7, consists of two sentences over against each other, so also the first of the second chapter, vers. 4, 5; and as in the first chapter the second sub-section runs in three opposed sentences, vers. 8, 9, 10, so does also the second sub-section in the second chapter,

vers. 9, 10, 11. Of course the apostle did not work according to a scheme laid down beforehand; but this concert and uniformity, descending into the very details, shows how clearly his thoughts were before his mind down to their minutest shade. This portion of the Epistle itself, to go no further, shows how much injustice is done to the author by those who refuse to find in him any regular process of thought.

Verses 3–5.

Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτὸν, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

Let us now descend to the particulars. The sentence at the outset, which gives us our point of view for the whole, is to the effect that we know God only if we keep His commandments. If *γινγνώσκειν τὸν Θεόν* means, as we have seen in full, to know Him as light, as He alone is described, it is obvious of itself that the *γινγνώσκειν* must be taken in its ordinary meaning, and by no means as equivalent to *ἀγαπᾶν*. But certainly this knowing is throughout the New Testament never a merely external knowledge; it is rather, so to speak, a knowledge full of soul, which involves and establishes of itself a fellowship with Him who is known. In the same sense as St. Paul uses the composite word *ἐπίγνωσις*, which is not found in St. John, St. John uses the simple word. In this plerophoric meaning the term often occurs in the Gospel: ch. i. 10, where the *οὐκ ἔγνω* answers to the *οὐ κατέλαβεν* of ver. 4, ch. viii. 54, xiv. 7, and others. It is not altogether strange to the Synoptics; comp. Mark vii. 23. If, then, to know is, in our apostle's use of it, the appropriation or the personal reception into ourselves of another and foreign nature, it is clear that the knowledge of God includes in itself a participation of His nature as known; and that thus the *γνῶναι τὸν Θεόν* here is essentially related to the *περιπατεῖν ἐν φωτί* of ch. i. 6: the rather as here also the connection requires us to assume that God is known as light. Such fellowship with God should declare itself in the *τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ*. This sentence, laying its foundation for what follows, is then

further unfolded in two verses containing two antithetical clauses.

VERSE 4.

Ὁ λέγων, "Ἔγνωκα αὐτὸν," καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν, ψεύστης ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν.

The former of these two clauses corresponds with perfect exactness to the sixth verse of the preceding chapter. It is true that, in the place of the expressly conditional *ἐάν τις εἴπῃ* there, we have here the more positive term *ὁ λέγων*, which is the form that rules the whole of this new section; but it is obvious that the meaning is the same. The uniformity of the external construction within the two sections,—in the one always *ἐάν*, in the other always the nominative participle,—as also the slight change of form between the two, serve only to set the parallelism of the thoughts in a light doubly clear. Further, that the *ἔγνωκα αὐτόν* in our passage corresponds as to its substance with the assertion *κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ*, ch. i. 6, we have just now seen; and it is equally obvious that the *μὴ τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς* runs parallel here with the *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ σκότει* there.

The form of the condemning conclusion is, with all the similarity of contents in the two passages, rather different; and that difference presents a slight change in the thought. In the first chapter the conclusion lays down two *kinds of activity*, *ψεύδεσθαι* and *ἀλήθειαν οὐ ποιεῖν*; but here we have, on the contrary, two *states* or conditions, that of *ψεύστης εἶναι* and that in which a man is not partaker of the truth. In the former it is said that the original pattern of truth, its full reality, the real substance of the divine being, does not communicate itself to the man; here it is said that generally it is not in him.

VERSE 5.

Ὃς δ' ἂν τηρῇ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον, ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ τετελείωται. ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμεν.

In the same way as ch. ii. 4 corresponds with ch. i. 6,

ch. ii. 5 corresponds with ch. i. 7. Both passages urge the importance of the exhibition of true godliness as opposed to the mere semblance of it. The form of the first limb of the sentence, or the protasis, in the latter case is not the participle, as in the previous verse, nor is it an actual conditional clause, as in the former chapter; but it is a relative sentence with *ἄν*, which closely approximates to the positive form with nominative nouns which prevails throughout the section. In the present case also, the last limb of the sentence, or the apodosis, corresponds in ch. i. 7 to ch. ii. 5; as in the former the highest benefit of the walk in light is specified as the *καθαρίζει τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ κ.τ.λ.*, so also here the closing clause declares the blessing of *τηρεῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ* to be the full and perfect participation in the divine nature of love.

The passage of the Gospel, ch. viii. 31, which gave us above the right hint for the right interpretation of the *λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ* will shed some light on the *ἀληθῶς* also: *ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ ἀληθῶς μαθηταί μού ἐστε*. It may be, indeed, that *ἀληθῶς* occurs sometimes in the New Testament with the meaning of mere affirmation, equivalent to *profecto;* but that is never the case in St. John, not even in John i. 48: the expression as he uses it always denotes the internal reality as opposed to the outward appearance only. So it is here. With him who obeys the *λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, love, the love which makes the character or nature of God, is perfected in its fullest reality and entire fulness. *Τελειοῦσθαι* is reserved by St. John for the consummation of love, and of perfected fellowship with God through love; comp. besides ch. iv. 12, 17, 18, ch. xvii. 25 in the Gospel. In itself it is not a startling or revolting thought, that the love of God should dwell in us in its full measure and in its simple perfection. According to Eph. iv. 16, we are to grow up *εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος Χριστοῦ*; but here our perfecting (*μέτρον ἡλικίας*) is this, that the whole fulness of Christ dwells in us. Again, as Christ is the *χαρακτὴρ καὶ ἀπαύγασμα* of the Father in such a manner that the whole *πλήρωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ* dwells in Him, this proves that the *πλήρωμα τοῦ*

Θεοῦ is supposed to dwell in us. And that this *πλήρωμα* of God is essentially love, we are taught by the fundamental dictum of 1 John iv. 16; as also St. Paul exhorts us, in the only place (Eph. v. 7) where he places God before us as a pattern, to strive after that pattern through walking in love.

The little clause that follows, *ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμεν*, takes up again the fundamental thought placed first in ver. 3, and thus bears its witness that the first sub-section of the new section has come to its close. Marking the uniformity of structure throughout, it is not to be overlooked—though we venture to give it only as a supposition—that in ver. 5 there is but *one* conclusion, while in ch. i. 7, the verse correlative with ch. ii. 5, there are two; here then we have, instead of the second, this summing up repetition of the fundamental thought. The parallel *ἐν τούτῳ* of the third verse testifies, were any proof necessary, that these words are not to be referred to the last conclusion, *ἡ ἀγαπὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ τετελείωται*, but to the first clause, *ἐὰν τηρῶμεν*, or still better probably, to the whole preceding period.

VERSE 6.

Ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν, ὀφείλει, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησε, καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτως περιπατεῖν.

It is clear now that there is a progression in the following verses; but it is important to keep it in the right order. For instance, it is not to be found forthwith in the new idea *μένειν ἐν Θεῷ*. It is undoubtedly true that the three ideas *γνῶναι*, ver. 3, *εἶναι*, ver. 5, *μένειν*, ver. 6, express a gradation: *cognitio, communio, constantia in communione*. But because the progress of the thought *might* rest upon this gradation, that does not prove that it does so in the present case. This is opposed first of all by the fact that in ver. 5, at the end of the section which began with the *γνῶσις Θεοῦ*, what was said is summed up again by *εἶναι ἐν αὐτῷ*; it could not have been the apostle's point to introduce a new thought in the recapitulation; and the emphasis must lie not upon the difference between *γνῶναι*

and *εἶναι*, but upon what they have in common. The main consideration, however, is this. If the gradation in the three ideas before us were the point which carries the apostle's thoughts onwards, the emphasis would have lain on the blessing conferred in keeping the divine commandments; that, however, is obviously not the case, but it lies in the following the commandment itself. The distinctive feature of our section is not promissory, but hortatory. Consequently, the three ideas only in passing indicate the whole comprehensiveness of the blessing which is attached to the keeping of the divine word, marking it out under its several aspects. The emphasis, however, lies not upon their difference, but upon their relative identity. The progression of the thought rests rather upon the *περιπατεῖν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν*. In that phrase the contents of the divine will, hitherto viewed generally as *ἐντολαί*, and again made more specific as *λόγος αὐτοῦ*, is yet again more closely defined. We also must exhibit the same walk which Christ exhibited. What was said before had shown, even if the reader did not know it from the outset, that the walking in love was alone signified. And this resemblance to the Lord is imposed on us as the supreme obligation; if indeed the *οὕτως*, against which there is certainly some slight external evidence, is the true reading: the *καί* and the *οὕτως* would doubly emphasize the *αὐτό* and thus strengthen the parallel. And this walk is obligatory on the Christian (*ὀφείλει*); moreover, through an obligation contracted by his own free act, that is, by his own word (*ὁ λέγων*). That, for the rest, Holy Scripture has exhibited Christ as a pattern only in His sufferings, is a fact which, admitted by all expositors, we keep in our view here in passing; without, however, entering upon the question whether our passage constitutes an exception, and how far it does so. The sequel will clear up this point.

Verses 7, 8.

Ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ἐντολὴν παλαιὰν, ἣν εἴχετε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ παλαιά ἐστιν ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. Πάλιν ἐντολὴν καινὴν

γράφω ὑμῖν, ὅ ἐστιν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν· ὅτι ἡ σκοτία παράγεται, καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει.

We enter on that sequel with a double expectation. First, that is, we are obliged to expect a closer definition of the contents of ver. 6, as we have seen in our general remarks upon the section that we are still on the way to its central point in ver. 9. But what constitutes the closer relation between ver. 6 and the sequel can, in the absence of any external bond of connection, be shown only by a penetrating study of the particulars. But, secondly, the appeal, so emphatic and disconnected, which stands at the beginning, and so obviously springs from a vehement feeling, points us to the fact that the apostle attaches a special importance to what is about to follow. As to the ἀδελφοί of the *Textus receptus*, however aptly it may suit a section on love of *brethren*, we are obliged by external reasons to prefer the reading ἀγαπητοί.

But the main question is, what we are to understand by the ἐντολὴ καινή and παλαιά. There has been a disposition to interpret them of two distinct commandments: in which case, probably, the ἐντολὴ παλαιά would be brotherly love, and the ἐντολὴ καινή the imitation of Christ; or the order might be inverted; or a third interpretation might be supposable, since the section itself furnishes no key, and the idea of two separate commandments of course opens the way for all kinds of solutions. But the notion of thus dividing them is as a theory full of insurmountable difficulties, both formal and in the matter. The expression itself opposes it, as it seems to us; for we should in such a case expect, not οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν ἀλλὰ παλαιάν, but "as well a new commandment as an old," or something like this; and similarly, in the eighth verse, instead of πάλιν ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω, we should expect "and yet again I write," and so forth. For if the apostle, in fact, announced two commandments, an old one and a new one, it would be impossible for him to have said, without any further explanation, that one of them he did not announce. Thus we must understand that only one commandment is meant, which, viewed from

different points, may now be considered as new and now as old.

But there are material as well as formal difficulties in the theory of two separate commandments. For it would be most obvious on that supposition to describe the command to follow Christ as the *ἐντολὴ παλαιά*, and that of brotherly love as the *καινή*. But it is impossible to admit that the former of these was older than the other; even in the sense that the churches received the precept to follow Christ before they received that of loving one another. For where can we imagine a church which had not been taught to include this among the elements of the faith? Still less can we conceive that St. John should call that commandment old because it had been communicated in what he had said above, and the other new because he was about to communicate it: for how can a commandment be called old because it has just been announced? Thus we must regard the *ἐντολὴ καινὴ καὶ παλαιά* as one and the same commandment viewed under different aspects. This being so, of course it can mean no other than that of brotherly love, of which the section before us treats. Even if the commandment in question were referred to the *περιπατεῖν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν*, that would make no material difference, for we have seen that even these words have for their substance nothing but the example of brotherly love. Formally, of course, there would then be a certain difference introduced into the thought; but we will for the time assume that brotherly love in general is the matter of the precept. Further consideration will show whether vers. 7 and 8 are to be referred forwards to ver. 9, that is, to the *ἀγαπᾶν τοὺς ἀδελφούς*, or backwards to ver. 6, the *περιπατεῖν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησε*.

In what sense, then, is the commandment of brotherly love an old one? It seems obvious and plausible at the outset to consider this as meaning that it had been already given in the Old Testament, and that it was called also an *ἐντολὴ καινή*, because Christ had in an altogether new way established it as a law. Nor would it be a valid objection

to this that the readers were for the most part Gentile Christians, to whom the Old Testament had no authority; for the New Testament regards the whole kingdom of God as one unity, so that the Gentile Christians were the legitimate heirs of the ancient oracles. But, certainly, were this the right interpretation, we should expect to find the apostle using the plural, as including himself and all: *ἣν ἔσχομεν, ἣν ἠκούσαμεν.* But by speaking in the second person he distinguishes himself from his readers as his disciples; and this of itself makes it probable that the *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἔσχετε* refers to the beginning of their Christianity. Moreover, we have seen that *λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ* in ver. 5 points to the announcement made through Christ, and it would seem obvious to refer the *λόγος* of ver. 7 also to this; accordingly, the *λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε* is the announcement of salvation communicated through the apostles. We must note how delicately careful is the insertion and omission of the article in our verse; not a new commandment write I unto you, the author says, but an old one, which ye have had since the beginning of your Christianity; and the saving announcement which ye then heard (the second *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* at the end of the verse must be struck out), the entire *λόγος* concerning the personal Logos, has only this meaning, the very same old commandment (here the article comes in) concerning which I speak.

And now, once more, how can this commandment be termed a new one? The answer of this difficult question, or the way to it, is indicated evidently enough; for in John xiii. 34 we have a quite similar utterance. The Lord says in connection with the last Passover: *ἐντολὴν καινὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους.* In this verse we find the constitutive elements of our present passage: here as there brotherly love is called an *ἐντολὴ καινή*; here as there the same closer definition is appended, for the *περιπατεῖν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν* corresponds precisely to the *ἀγαπᾶν καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς.* But the same question arises as to the passage in the Gospel itself, how far brotherly love could be there called a new commandment;

since it was not only prescribed in the Old Testament, but had been by Christ Himself, during the course of His ministry, again and again imprinted upon His disciples' minds as the second great commandment, like unto the first. But when we narrowly examine it, we find a difference. So to love as He Himself loved, the Lord had never before commanded; and it will be evident that in this appendage not only is there a new and stronger incentive to brotherly love, but that also the precept in fact receives an altogether new colour. Brotherly love on this foundation, and enforced by this example, does in very deed become a perfectly new commandment.

To apprehend this more fully, we must take a step onward in the evangelical history. The evangelist begins the second great division of the Gospel, the narrative of the passion, with the words, *Ἰησοῦς ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς*. It is manifest that this does not say merely that our Lord also, in the last days of His earthly life, advanced in the love which He had all along displayed: for how should it occur to the thought of any one to deny that? What was there in this general idea that could have moved the apostle to place it in the foreground with such deep emphasis? We are constrained rather to believe that the justification of an utterance thus made emphatic lay in this, that a peculiar power of love was manifested in the passion of Christ, that it was a specifically arduous love, a higher degree of love, which enabled the Lord to continue, even *εἰς τέλος*, in the course of love which He had always displayed. And, in fact, it would have been—to speak humanly—natural if the Lord had been frightened back from this *ἀγαπὴ εἰς τέλος*, which imposed upon Him such an unspeakable burden; and it signalized the full glory of His power to love, that it was capable of sustaining such a test. Thus the verse of the Gospel distinguishes two grades or kinds of love with which the Lord loved His own.

The same result emerges from a closer examination of John xiii. 12 seq., especially of the fifteenth verse. The most superficial glance shows at once that the Lord Himself

and His evangelist exhibited the feet-washing as a demonstration of love bearing a peculiar character, such as His former life had not yet displayed. And with this we now connect the remark, that precisely on this occasion, and on this occasion alone, Jesus required of His disciples to love one another as He had loved them. The washing of their feet is the theme which runs through its variations in the whole of the following section. See ver. 15: *ὑπόδειγμα ἔδωκα ὑμῖν, ἵνα καθὼς ἐποίησα ὑμῖν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιῆτε*, with ver. 34: *ἐντολὴν καινὴν. δίδωμι ὑμῖν.* If, then, we ask wherein the distinctiveness of this proof of love lay, as distinguished from all the other demonstrations of love which the hand of the Redeemer's love had wrought out during His previous life, the answer is threefold. First, in all the other deeds through which the Lord's love dispensed grace and help, He acted, according to His own express testimony, on the suggestion of His heavenly Father: they were tokens of love, but He wrought them not *as* expressions of love, but *as* expressions of obedience. But we cannot say the same in precisely the same sense concerning this act of the feet-washing: beyond all other acts, it leaves the impression that it sprang from a perfectly spontaneous and instantaneous impulse. It was indeed in absolute harmony with the Father's will; but the Lord performed it not *as* of obedience, but *as* from the source of His own love gushing forth in unwonted power. Secondly, in all the previous demonstrations of His love, the Lord had ever maintained His position of *κύριος* and *διδάσκαλος*; they were the manifestations of Himself precisely as of a loving *διδάσκαλος*. But in the feet-washing He denied Himself this very position, and was constrained to deny Himself of it in order to accomplish the act. In this deed of humility He was no longer the *διδάσκαλος*, but rather the *διακονῶν*. And there especially is the emphatic love which, according to ch. xiii., was manifested in the passion, that He surrendered the supreme and exalted place which, despite His humiliation, was always His, and descended from the dignity of the prophet to the deep renunciation of the cross. Thirdly, in all the other demonstrations of Christ's love we

receive the impression that He must act as He did, and that if He did not so act there would have been a blot on His image; we know also that His disciples and the people expected from Him His miracles. On the other hand, the feet-washing was expected by no one, nor could any one have expected it; yea, if we suppose Him to have pretermitted it, no blot would have rested on His person.

Thus we have, in connection with our Lord Himself, two different kinds of demonstration of love. Only in the latter did He present Himself as a pattern to His disciples; and it is this precise love, exercised in imitation of Him, that He Himself described as the ἐντολὴ καινή. Now, as the Lord's love εἰς τέλος, that which He showed in the feet-washing, was related to His earlier demonstrations, so must, among His disciples, the love which He commands them to exercise in imitation of Himself be related to the love with which they had hitherto loved, such as they had found prescribed in the Old Testament. As the Lord, according to our remarks above, until the night of the passion had performed His acts, not in the first instance as from love, but rather from obedience, so until the night of the passion it had been for the disciples a commandment obligatory to love their neighbour; they practised love as a duty, and in every particular act were constrained to remember the obligation. For it is obvious that the question is here not of those testimonies of love which spring from natural and instinctive sympathy, —these do not generally lie at the basis of any ethics,— but of such love as is exercised in conscious self-denying acts. Such acts of self-denial it was necessary for men before Christ, and it is necessary to every man now, especially in the beginning of the Christian life, to constrain himself to perform. As, again, in all the earlier demonstrations of His love, Christ had still remained the διδάσκαλος and κύριος, so also the natural position of man in the first stage of love thus considered remains uninvaded and untouched: in His loving acts the King remains what He is; He is simply a loving King, even as the Lord among His own was a loving διδάσκαλος. But when this same Lord presents Himself, that is to say, more particularly His feet-

washing, as the pattern of love, it is His will to put an end to this love from mere obedience: from that time His disciples were to love after the model He gave them generally, and gave them specifically at that very hour; in such a way, namely, that the individual act should spring, not from the obligation of law, but from the direct and compulsory pressure of the heart. Further, as the Lord surrendered His position as Lord in the feet-washing, and in His passion generally, so should we also so love as that all human distinctions may cease in its presence: no longer loving the πλησίον, but the ἀδελφόν, as it stands written: οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος καὶ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος· πάντες ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. It is love when the Lord exhibits Himself as a loving Master towards slaves; but love as the ἐντολὴ καινή is commended to us, to be regarded and to be felt, not as Lord, but as itself δοῦλος. And this touches the third mark which we perceived to be the peculiarity of the feet-washing: this love will not limit itself to cases in which there is a visible occasion or external necessity for its display; but its unrestrained vehemence as a living spring will go beyond all expectations, and approve itself literally without measure or degree. Further, it is clear that this ἐντολὴ καινή can be called such only in a broader sense of the word commandment: it is, namely, a goal set before men, for ever to be striven after; not, however, as properly speaking an obligatory law; for as soon as it is exercised as such, it ceases to be the *new* commandment. Rather the matter stands thus: that the new spring of love, which in the passion issued forth from the Redeemer's heart, streams, through His return to the Father, His glorification, and the consequent mission of the Spirit, into the hearts of Christians as an active energy of their life; and thus the commandment comes of itself into fulfilment, not *qua* commandment, but as an irrepressibly energizing power. Finally, we may be permitted to complete this biblical disquisition by pointing out how both the kinds or stages of love which we have distinguished in the spiritual domain are reproduced in all human relations. As well the love of friendship as the conjugal love exhibit them in their degree, seeking

especially all individual opportunities for their manifestation. But the more internal the relation is, the more surely does this necessity of seeking cease; because the whole life and being are more and more fashioned into one entire demonstration of love.

Having thus established the meaning of ἐντολὴ καινή in the passage of the Gospel, we may easily apply it to our present passage, and it will be found to harmonize with the whole in the completest and most satisfactory manner. The commandment of love, St. John says, is to you a παλαιόν; for it is the λόγος which ye heard from the beginning. There is no evangelical annunciation possible without this precept: indeed, the whole Gospel itself is nothing but this precept. That is the first stage of Christian brotherly love; and, as the benediction upon it, it is most pertinently assured by the apostle that the love of God, as that of the Father, dwells in us after a perfected manner. That is to say, God cannot deprive Himself of His nature: it is true that His love flows not from any obligation, but out of the inexhaustible source of His being, which is love; yet He remains ever the loving God, the loving Lord. Hence it is this blessed consequence of our brotherly love,—why speak we of consequence? it is this blessed ground of it,—to wit, that His nature of love abides in us, and in us makes its dwelling, which the apostle makes prominent first of all. But this is not the highest blessing of it. That the love of Christ dwells in us is yet more, and a higher stage of love; for His was the self-renouncing, self-denying, all-surrendering, and self-sacrificing love. And this love is the καινὴ ἐντολή which is proclaimed to us. The στοιχεῖα of Christianity had been long embraced by the church; now the great point was that they ἐπὶ τὴν τελείωσιν φέρεσθαι (Heb. vi.). To the τελείωσις, especially to the τελεία χαρά, would the apostle lead them on; and we have already seen in ch. i. 4 that this perfect joy rests in one sense upon the perfectness of brotherly love. The one passage has the other in view.

At the point thus carefully secured we are in a position to decide whether our verses look forward to the

expression ἀγαπᾶν τοὺς ἀδελφούς, or backwards to the περιπατεῖν καθὼς Χριστὸς περιεπάτησεν. The latter is obviously favoured by the circumstance that the readers, when they came to the words οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, must necessarily have at once thought that the apostle was referring to the commandment just given to them; but a still stronger reason is, that he expressly describes the ἐντολὴ καινή as the λόγος, ὃν ἤκουσαν, thus taking up again the λόγος of the fifth verse. The weightiest argument, however, is found in what we have already perceived, that the commandment thus impressed upon them was no other than that they should walk after the example of Christ. The matter, strictly speaking, stands thus: First, he describes the conversation, or rather the whole life of Jesus quite generally as the commandment; but then he goes on, more definitely, to exhibit the love of Christ manifested in the passion, and the imitation of it he makes into a commandment by means of the word ἐντολὴ καινή: this word being naturally understood by the readers acquainted with the Gospel, without any express reference to the passage on which our exposition has been based. Thus, moreover, we may justify to ourselves the remark already made, that Christ is presented to us as a pattern only in His passion,—that is to say, after we have heard a quite general exhortation to the following of His life of love, the emphasis in our passage declines upon the ἀγάπη εἰς τέλος, upon the love which the Lord manifested on the night of His sorrows. For the rest, it may be observed once more, that not all the thoughts which we have brought in here were by the apostle himself expressly set forth. They are rather only the premises which must have been living in his spirit when he used the word which he did use. We may infer from his utterance here, that all this was in the background of his mind.

But a new difficulty emerges, after all our exposition, in consequence of the appended clause, ὅ ἐστιν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν. The words admit of a double grammatical construction. Either they are regarded as the proper object of γράφω, and the preceding ἐντολὴν καινήν as an attributive

describing it: I write now to you this, which in you is the truth, as a new commandment. Or, inverting it, we may take the ἐντολὴν καινήν as the object, and the relative clause as merely a declarative closer definition: I write to you a new commandment, namely, that which in you is truth. When we now observe that the idea of the ἐντολὴ καινή is the fundamental theme of the verse, that, further, the ἐντολὴ παλαιά is certainly the objective of the γράφειν in the seventh verse, which formally and materially corresponds with this, we are constrained to decide in favour of the latter. But we must remember that the sentence with ὅ is by no means the same as the sentence with ἥ, or to be taken as simply a closer definition of the ἐντολή. Apart from the question,—which, however, we ought not to omit, —why the apostle in that case did not use the feminine pronoun, the thought would on that supposition be altogether different. If we had a relative clause with ἥ belonging to the ἐντολή, we should have generally only *one* objective definition; brotherly love would be simply called a new commandment; but as it is, we find two parallel definitions of it,—one as a new commandment, and the other as something that is truth in the readers.

But if we regard the form as settled, the matter of the sentence meets us with new questions. For instance, how comes it to pass that what is truth in the readers—that is, according to the firmly fixed idea of the word, living reality in them—is yet exhibited as a commandment? This would seem indeed to place the reality of what is commanded before the readers as their aim, and not regard it as a present experienced fact. Again, how is it possible that what is supposed to be a reality in the readers, is nevertheless described to them as a *new* announcement? But the view we have established of the ἐντολὴ καινή itself suggests the possibility of giving right answers to these questions.

We have seen that objectively, in relation to brotherly love, there has been a twofold commandment; for, while it was taught from the beginning, both in the Old Testament and in the New, it was so taught by the passion of Christ

as to become an altogether new commandment. Not only so; we have seen, further, that subjectively also in the life of every Christian the same twofold characteristic approves itself: in the beginning of the Christian career love is of the former, in its further stages it is of the latter kind. Further, we have discerned that brotherly love as an ἐντολὴ καινή can by no means be fulfilled as an obligatory law; that its nature is rather to flow from its own free and independent personal impulse, while at the same time it is effectual only through the Spirit of Him who exercised it symbolically and in its original and perfect character. Now, if the readers of the Epistle have received this Spirit, there must be in them at least the commencement or starting-point of this new and higher brotherly love; in some definite degree it must have become in them ἀληθής. It is therefore a new commandment only in as far as now, in virtue of the apostle's word, they are, on the one hand, made conscious of its possession, the old precept becoming a new one because now it has become their own conscious possession; and, on the other hand, that word presents to them that which they already had, being Christians, as now to be a conscious end, the realization, and indeed perfect realization of which must be their problem and goal: thus this higher kind of brotherly love becomes after all an ἐντολή to them. What we, in our remarks upon John xiii. 34, saw to be a feature of the new commandment,—that it was at once a commandment and yet not a commandment, because springing directly from the impulse of the heart,—that the apostle says here expressly; and this, as we think, impresses on our exposition the seal of its approval. Thus, as the previous words present the brotherly love which the apostle commends as at once an old and yet a new commandment, so in our verse it is presented as a commandment, and yet again as not a commandment. But this double character of the idea is designedly not exhibited as an antithesis,—as if it were ἐντολὴν παλαιὰν γράφω ὑμῖν, πάλιν δὲ καινήν, as also ἐντολὴν μέν, ἀληθὲς δὲ ἐν ὑμῖν,—but as perfectly interwoven and one. Hence the first time it is the πάλιν, merely marking a new

starting-point; the second time, the simple appositional clause ὃ ἀληθές ἐστιν.

Thus upon the complete sentence, as appended, ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν, there now falls a clear light,—that is, the brotherly love now in question as ἐντολὴ καινή has been brought into the world only through the example of Christ, and can by us be attained only through fellowship with Him. Hence the apostle, by ἐν ἀυτῷ, assigns the reason on account of which this brotherly love was in them, so far as it really dwelt in their souls.

But how it comes to pass that what in Christ is truth is truth also in them, the last words of the verse explain: ὅτι ἡ σκοτία παράγεται καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει. That this ὅτι is not declarative, and to be taken as stating the contents of the ἐντολὴ καινή, is obvious from the very matter of the sentence. It describes, forsooth, a purely objective historical fact, while the idea of ἐντολή in its very nature contains a subjective element: I may indeed represent a fact as at the same time involving a requirement, as indeed this clause shows; but a mere objective fact cannot as such be called an ἐντολή. Thus the words simply announce a reason. But of what must a reason be given? We might think of the ἐντολὴ καινή, and say that the apostle gives this command because of the fact now impressively stated: "since now the darkness recedes, the true light now unfolds its reality; walk then as it becomes you, like τέκνα φωτός, in this light." The warranty for the precept would then be essentially parallel with that of Rom. xiii. 11 seq.

Against this we have nothing really material to urge; but still the reason assigned is more pointed, and appears to us more natural also, if we refer the causal clause to the immediately preceding sentence, ὅ ἐστιν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν, thus making it explain how that commandment has its reality in us: to put it more plainly, a reason is given for the καί in the words referred to. "Ye are indeed already under the power of the light; therefore that which is ἐν αὐτῷ is also ἐν ὑμῖν, and the law which I demand has its reality in you; but the great consideration is, that it be

brought into full consciousness and to its perfection." The darkness is passing away, St. John writes. He does not add, in connection with it, *ἐν ὑμῖν*: the proposition is therefore to be taken in its universality. The place in which the darkness reigns is, as we saw on ch. i., the world in its biblical meaning; and with the appearing of Him who has overcome the world, both it and its prince are judged and condemned, and the power of darkness is broken. It has not yet passed away, but it is in the act of passing; the spread of the kingdom of God, and, what is equivalent to that, the passing away of the world, are the signature and the very matter of all church history.

But alongside of this negative, the *παράγεσθαι* of the darkness, there runs a parallel positive, *τὸ φῶς ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει*. This expression is a distinct remembrancer of John i. 4, 9, in which latter verse we find it in the same words; and if we add that St. John always understands by *φῶς*, Christ, or, as in ch. i. 5 here, God, it will commend itself to think of the Lord Himself as here directly signified. It is not a contradiction to this, that in the previous words the *σκοτία* does not expressly refer to a person; for we have already shown on ch. i. 5 that here lies the all-pervading distinction, that while the light is concentrated in a person, the darkness never is. All goodness is in the power of divine light, a lesser jet from the greater Flame; but all evil, while it is occasioned by Satan, is not in the same sense an effluence from him as the light is an outbeaming from God.

Christ, however, is not called *φῶς* merely, but *φῶς ἀληθινόν*: a genuine Johannaean appendage. While *ἀλήθεια* signifies the objective truth which is absolute fulness and reality, *ἀληθινός* signifies that a specified person is that which is predicated of him in the fullest possible degree. It is the application of the *ἀλήθεια* to one particular question or point; yet so that *ἀληθινός*, as compared with *ἀληθής*, specifies the form as opposed to the matter: *φῶς ἀληθές* would mean that the light is a true one, and not merely has the semblance of it; *φῶς ἀληθινόν*, on the contrary, declares that the idea *φῶς* must be taken in its full reality. The

true light "already" shineth: the ἤδη is the correlative of the present παράγεται in the preceding sentence; the light has already commenced its activity. This clause also is altogether general and objective, — spoken without any external or obvious reference to the readers. But when we consider that, as the σκοτία comes to manifestation in the κόσμος, so the light developes its energy in the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ; and again, that the readers are supposed to be ἐν φωτὶ περιπατοῦντες, living under the power of the light, —it will be clear that these general statements also specifically indicate that the light appears in them, that they have their portion in that love which is gathered up in the φῶς ἀληθινόν.

How far this is the case, thus how far brotherly love can be exhibited as the consequence of walking in light; that is to say, further, how far the close of the eighth verse demonstrates the beginning of it; and lastly, how far the whole section results from the one sentence Θεὸς φῶς,— is now the concluding question which requires summary answer. The collective elements of the answer lie in the words of the apostle. If Christ, namely, like God, is φῶς, —if His walk was a walk in love,—it is clear that fellowship with His light-nature is and must be fellowship with His walk in love. What inwardly, in the subjects themselves, approves itself as ἀλήθεια, shows itself outwardly in relation to other subjects as ἀγάπη.

Verses 9–11.

Ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι, καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν, ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι. Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει, καὶ σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν· ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖ, καὶ οὐκ οἶδε ποῦ ὑπάγει, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ.

The two verses just expounded correspond, in their relation to the whole, with the third verse of the chapter: in both cases the matter of the sub-section is summed up compendiously and placed at the head. The following verses, from ver. 7 to ver. 9, correspond, on the one hand, to

vers. 4, 5 within our second section; while, on the other hand, they run parallel with ch. i. 8–10. The thought presented in the preceding words is now elucidated; but in the genuine Johannaean style, that of bringing out into prominence the constituent elements involved in the ideas themselves. We might well wonder that the apostle, after he had preparatively spoken of brotherly love with such solemn and plain emphasis, should now descend to the terseness of simple dialectical disquisition about it. But it is precisely here, where he has set the supreme beauty of brotherly love before his readers in the preceding words, that he now, with inexorable logic, asks the question, Art thou of God or not? Hast thou attained this goal or not? The former of the verses is here also negative, as we have found to be the case always. He who saith that he is in the light—the expression is occasioned by the words going just before, *τὸ φῶς ἤδη φαίνει*—and does *not* love: this is the first supposition. Fellowship with God, and with God as light, is ever the final goal of all the apostle's exhortations: hence this is placed here in the foreground. But here this fellowship is only asserted: in very fact there is hatred instead. The formal negation, *μὴ ἀγαπᾶν*, is displaced in favour of the full positive expression *μισεῖν*. *Tertium non datur.* Particularly in the case of brethren, and in relation to them,—for that is the question here,—indifference is utterly impossible. We may indeed speak in common life of inclinations and dislikes, but these are really nothing but stages of love or hatred not yet come to their full development or into clear consciousness. Indeed, the apostle does not speak of hatred in general, but of the most fearful and unnatural hatred: that which has our brethren for its object. The expression may refer to the *πλησίον*, to every man; but also specifically to those who with us are members of the body of Christ. Now, as the apostle in what precedes had been exhorting us so to love as Jesus loved; as he almost expressly reminds us of the feet-washing, and this, we know, referred, like the whole section of the Gospel in which the *ἐντολὴ καινή* is the subject (ch. xiii.–xvii.), to the disciples of Jesus in the strictest

sense, we are constrained to limit the term "brethren" to the inmost circle of the Christian discipleship. But we should expect here, as parallel with the corresponding verse of the previous section, some such conclusion as *ψεύστης ἐστίν*. Instead of this, the apostle lays down here, with keen severity, the antithesis of the mere assertion of walking in the light (*ὁ λέγων*) in the words *ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι*. The last words evidently have the emphasis. Even yet: so much and so long as he nevertheless declares the contrary; or, probably with more correctness: even yet, although the true light already shines and the darkness is wearing away.

Now for the obverse of all this. He that loveth his brother—here also, as in ch. i. 9, the direct antithesis is not formally indicated, but to the feeling of the reader it is thereby all the more emphatic—abideth in the light. Assuredly this light is not kindled in him by brotherly love; but this latter is itself the result of the *εἶναι ἐν τῷ φωτί*. But as, in the natural life, life itself is the condition of all living activities, and is then by these activities confirmed and strengthened, so it is in this case. Hence the expression *μένειν*. By the side of this positive benediction of the *ἀγαπᾶν τοὺς ἀδελφούς* there runs a negative: *σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν*. But the question, very difficult of decision, arises, whether the offence has for its object the *ἀγαπᾶν* itself or the brethren,—that is, whether the believer has no occasion of his own sin in himself, or is not to be an occasion of sinning to his brother. There are weighty reasons on both sides. In favour of the former is the strong consideration, that throughout the whole section the subject is how every individual is to secure his own salvation, not how he may effect or influence his brethren's. And this view of it would yield a good meaning. As all sin is egoism, he who in love walks as Christ walked has no longer any impulse of sin within him; every temptation to sin is restrained by the habitual stream of love from issuing in act. On the other hand, in favour of the second meaning is the consistent usage of the New Testament, which without exception regards *σκάνδαλον* as the offence

or cause of stumbling which may be put in the way of others. And when we reflect with what solemn earnestness our Lord, in St. Matthew and St. Luke, threatens those who are the cause of offence, it is evident that in fact there is a higher blessing in being exempt from cause of stumbling in our fellow-Christians. And with this agrees our experience, that lovelessness on our part is wont to occasion sin in others beyond anything else; and the doctrine of St. Peter, that we by well-doing, or by expressions of love, may stop the mouths of ignorant men. Consequently, we may well temporarily decide for this latter interpretation, without, however, being able positively to refute the other.

Just as in the second sub-section of the first section, the second of our present one also consists of three clauses; and the third (ver. 11) is here, as there, more full and more forcible than the preceding ones. He that hateth his brother not only *is* in darkness,—that was also already in the μένει of the ninth verse,—but the darkness rules all the actions of his life, περιπατεῖ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ; and, forsooth, as his way is wrapped in darkness, his goal also is hidden from him, οὐκ οἶδε ποῦ ὑπάγει. Now, when a verb of motion like ὑπάγειν is connected with a ποῦ, that is, with an adverb of rest, corresponding to ἐν with a dative, two points are made emphatic: as well the movement to an end as also the result of it. And what is the goal to which the hating man moves without knowing it? Generally, it is quite right to explain that he knows not to what a depth of sinful ruin he may be driven down by means of his hatred. But it is simpler and more exact to take the σκοτία itself as his goal. The persons in question say, and that without *conscious* hypocrisy, that they are in the light; and precisely through this ignorance as to their own condition, as to the way in which they are found, they are blinded also as to the goal, which is again no other than darkness. And how comes it that they so absolutely know not this sure end of all? The same darkness hath blinded their eyes. Ὀφθαλμός is not the "natural power of apprehension," the intellectual eye in the ordinary sense; but in the New Testament style it is the organ by means of which

man becomes susceptible to the powers of light and darkness compassing him about, this being altogether distinct from the mere understanding. According as it is determined in its function by the one or the other, is the whole man light or darkness. Finally, let us not fail to observe the progression in the last three verses: ver. 9 has only one predicate in the conclusion, ver. 10 has two, ver. 11 three.

Verses 12–14.

Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. Γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν. Ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδία, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα. Ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροί ἐστε, καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει, καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν.

The position of the three following verses in the organism of the Epistle cannot be determined before we have examined their meaning somewhat in detail, and made it clear to our minds. The apostle addresses himself to his readers in a sixfold appeal; but the meaning of this depends in some measure on the right reading in ver. 13. If the *Textus receptus* in that verse is correct, *γράφω ὑμῖν παιδία*, it is inevitably necessary to connect this *γράφω* with the *γράφω* of the three previous clauses; but in that case the *παιδία* must, in contradistinction from the *πατέρες* and *νεανίσκοι* of the two former members, be understood of actual children, so that the apostle would be supposed to address three several classes of age. But the external evidence is very strong in favour of the other reading, *ἔγραψα ὑμῖν παιδία*. In that case the clause no longer belongs to the preceding, but to the following; and we have three denominations of the readers in parallel and contrast: on the one hand, *τεκνία*, *πατέρες*, and *νεανίσκοι* bound together by *γράφω*; and, on the other hand, *παιδία*, *πατέρες*, *νεανίσκοι* bound together by *ἔγραψα*. But then it is further obvious that by *παιδία* and *τεκνία* children are not meant in the sense of physical age; all the readers are thus classed together as a whole, as in ch. ii. 1. The very

order seems at once to indicate this. If actual children had been intended, the apostle would certainly have arranged the terms in natural order, either advancing from the youngest to the eldest, or taking the inverted line; but to mention children first, then the fathers, and then again young men, has in it something inharmonious. To this may be added that, supposing children generally in physical age to have been meant, the antithesis to the *νεανίσκοι* would require us to think of little children; but neither were these present in the Christian assembly, for which the Epistle was primarily designed, nor can they be supposed to have been in a position to understand the apostle's missive. Thus, then, the apostle addresses the whole church twice in the first place, and then turns to the older and younger among them with special exhortation: whether older and younger in a physical sense must be as yet left undetermined.

Then, further, the sixfold *ὅτι* in the foreground requires explanation: the question being whether it gives the matter of the *γράφω*, or the reason assigned for it. The latter is decidedly the right view. An emphatic assertion of the good degree, the *καλὸς βαθμός*, which the church had purchased to itself, is not the substance of the Epistle; nor could it be such, unless the document had been meant to be a letter of consolation against undue despondency, or an epistle of commendation. But it is most manifestly neither of these. So then we must take *ὅτι* as causative: precisely because the churches were in the enjoyment and in the labour of faith, the apostle writes to them the letter before us. He does not teach the elements of Christianity; but it is his design to lay the finishing touches on their perfection, and bring to maturity the *πλήρωσις* of their *χαρά*.

What the apostle says to the church as a whole in his first clause, ver. 12,—that he writes to them under the supposition that they were already partakers of the forgiveness of sins,—appears not to be in harmony with ch. ii. 1, 2, where he mentions this forgiveness of sins as the object of his writing. In fact, this contradiction is the

same as in the eighth verse, where the apostle lays that down as an ἐντολή which he in the same breath acknowledges they had already realized; no other than what pervades the whole Epistle, which everywhere presupposes Christianity in the hearers and yet teaches it. It is precisely this relation, this substructure of the whole Epistle, which explains why St. John writes nothing new, and yet writes the old as being new: his presupposition and his object are one and the same. And the forgiveness of sins[1] he presupposes more definitely as having been διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. That the pronoun here refers to Christ, must be taken for granted because of the διὰ *cum accus.*, "on account of." But the name might generally be explained as the revelation of His person, as the name which the Lord by His deeds has made for Himself; but it may also refer to that name of Christ of which mention had been made, and the idea inherent in which was in the apostle's immediate memory, φῶς ἀληθινόν. The Lord, who is light, and came to bring light into the world, has for the sake of this His name vouchsafed us forgiveness.

If we have not missed the meaning of the τεκνία, as referring, namely, to the whole church, it will be thereby firmly established that the two specific utterances in regard to the πατέρες and the νεανίσκοι are simply deductions from the immediately preceding general clause. Now the forgiveness of sin has two aspects: on the one hand, it produces a strong warfare against sin, and that in the order of time is its first result; on the other hand, it assures a deeper knowledge of the Saviour through whom so great a benefit has been obtained and is continuously appropriated. This latter stage is not reached without some experience of the Christian life; it is the point of contest with sin, and therefore belongs rather, or belongs in a higher degree, to

[1] The form ἀφίωνται is grammatically difficult. But in Suidas, *Etym. ex Herodiano*, gram. Bekk. 470, 15, there is for ἀφιῖκα a Doric and even Attic form vouched, from which ἀφιώκαμεν and ἀφιωκίναι have sprung; similarly, the Pass. in inscript. Arcad. in the imperative form ἀφιώσθω. All this leads to the assumption of an extended form ἰόω instead of the common ἴω, against the formation of which nothing can be grammatically urged. Comp. on the passages quoted, Steph. *Thes.* I. p. 2662.

the later period of the Christian course. For, all knowledge of the Lord which may be supposed to spring from anything besides a warfare for the more and more perfect appropriation of the redeeming work of Christ, would be merely theoretic knowledge, and dead therefore in its relation to the true Christian life. The apostle here gives prominence to this second aspect of the matter; and the reason is that he will begin with the fathers, who naturally assumed the more important place in the Christian church and in any allusion to its members. The expressions *πατέρες* and *νεανίσκοι* must not be referred to merely intellectual stages of advancement: the second of the words will not allow this, as being entirely unsuitable. At the same time, it may be naturally supposed that the elders, who had of course occupied their place longer in the Christian church, and had more experience of life, were also intellectually more mature than the younger.

When the apostle presupposes that the elders had known *τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, the connection requires us to understand this of our Lord Christ alone. The strongest argument is not that the first words of the Epistle, *ὃ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, as also the beginning of the Gospel, contain similar descriptions of the Son; but that the forgiveness of sins emphasized in the previous verse, *διὰ τὸ ὄνομα Χριστοῦ*, suggests at once rather the knowledge of the Son than the knowledge of the Father. The young men, on the contrary, have overcome the wicked one; they have successfully withstood his *μεθοδείαις* (Eph. vi. 11). The thought seems to enter here without any point of connection and unprepared for. Forgiveness of sins had been mentioned in the first chapter and in the beginning of the second: what, however, of the *πονηρός* and the victory over him? But when we come to remember that the *σκοτία*, as in antithesis to the light, was a prominent idea in the previous paragraphs, and that it is this wicked one who has the *ἐξουσία τοῦ σκότους*, we shall not after all find the present mention of him so entirely isolated. That this victory over the enemy is described in the perfect tense, is not to be regarded as meaning that the victory was determined or finally settled

and ended: it simply draws a conclusion from the already past life of the young men.

With the third member of the thirteenth verse the second triad of addresses begins. The most striking difference we encounter is the changed ἔγραψα; which is all the more important a difference because of the general similarity in the contents of the two triads. The essentially identical substance of the two sub-sections makes it evident that the apostle's aim is to lay down in the most emphatic way possible the general fact of the Christian life and of the Christian knowledge in the churches. Hence it seems at once obvious to take the repetition of the verb in the sense of confirmation or additional assurance, in some distant analogy with the ὃ γέγραφα γέγραφα, John xix. 22: "I write unto you, and I assert it again that for these reasons I write to you;" essentially if not formally the same repetition is presented here as in Phil. iv. 4, χαίρετε, πάλιν ἐρῶ χαίρετε. But after all, this only accounts for the simple repetition generally, and does not explain the preterite form of the verb. We do not read, as we might expect, γράφω καὶ πάλιν γράφω. It is hardly admissible to refer the preterite to the first part of the Epistle now finished, and the preceding present to the whole of the Epistle itself,—"I write unto you generally for these reasons, and for them have specially written the previous words,"—because, first, the perfect γέγραφα would have been the more obvious form, and secondly, we should naturally expect the order to be inverted: "I have written what precedes under this presupposition, as indeed my whole Epistle proceeds from it." Nor will it help the case to refer the ἔγραψα to earlier writings of St. John, such as the Gospel; for in that case there would certainly have been some such appendage as "I write to you *now*, as I have written to you *before*." Nothing remains, then, but that we refer as well the ἔγραψα as the γράφω to the entire Epistle lying before us; in which case the great point is to determine why at one moment the apostle regards his writing as a matter of the present, and the next moment views it aoristically.

Now there is certainly a good reason for this, if the

writer's purpose is to reassert what he had said in the γράφω for the sake or in the service of some particular application. This distinctive application must then be sought in what immediately follows. The meaning would be: "I write to you on the ground of your Christian estate; as first said, *I have been induced to write* for this reason, and hence the strong injunction which I must address to you, μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον," ver. 15. That, in fact, those following words of injunction did rest upon the presupposition of their Christian character needs no proof; for vers. 15 seq. themselves assert the conclusion that the love of the world and the love of God cannot co-exist or tolerate each other. It might be objected that this "and hence," which we have supplied in ver. 15, stands not in the text. But when we find in three consecutive sentences the reasons given so emphatically for μὴ ἀγαπᾶν τὸν κόσμον, there seems no strict necessity to express formally the causal relation. After ver. 14 we have thus to insert a colon; before ver. 13*c* not only a point, but a period, the close of a sub-section. "I have written or wrote unto you, as I have said, only on the supposition of your fellowship with the light, of your victory over the darkness:—love not the world, for otherwise (ver. 15*b*) you discredit and shame my supposition." In the present γράφω the apostle has in view the passing act in which he is engaged; in the aorist ἔγραψα the Epistle is in his mind represented as finished; he speaks historically of the intellectual conception of the Epistle which preceded the actual performance of the writing. Because the conception of it was perfected, and in fact its realization half accomplished, the apostle *could* speak of his letter as of an historical fact; that he actually *does* so speak has this for its reason, that his writing rests upon the presupposition that his readers will follow his exhortation, μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον. Because his letter was produced by these express presuppositions, the churches must on that very account answer to them. To sum up all: the preterite form has for its reason this, that the following injunction is presented as the necessary result of the ex-

pectations and presuppositions which lie at the basis of the Epistle.

In this way the course of thought pursued in the portion of that Epistle now closed reaches the conclusion which the unity of its structure would lead us to expect. Ch. i. 6–10 corresponds most exactly in its construction with ch. ii. 3–11; but for ch. ii. 1–2 we find no parallel member remaining. From quite a different point of view, we have come to the conviction that this parallel member is to be found here: it in fact consists of ch. ii. 12–13*b*. The most important difference between these two parallels is this, that ch. ii. 1, 2 recapitulates only one half of its theme in the arrangement; while, on the other hand, ch. ii. 6, 12–13*b* not only brings in the other half, but also winds up the two previous sections, though its form is specifically determined by the second of them. With this parallel relation of the two periods the *γράφω* beginning each of them, ver. 1 and ver. 12, and the address to the church in *τεκνία* common to the two, agree. Both recapitulations or resumptions give prominence to the forgiveness of sins, but in a different way: the former makes it an end to be attained, the latter makes it the basis or reason of the apostle's writing. We have already seen that the difference is only an apparent one; but that the form in ver. 12 is determined and occasioned by the thought expressed in ver. 8. The two clauses which enter into detail, ver. 13*a* and *b*, answer admirably to the resuming purpose of the period. The *γνῶσις* is in ch. ii. 3 the first fundamental thought of the second sub-section; hence it is taken up again, not, however, as the knowledge of the Father, as in ch. ii. 3, but as that of the Son, for throughout ch. ii. 6 seq. the knowledge of God has been specifically defined as the knowledge of Christ. And the idea of the victory over the wicked one is contained, ch. ii. 8, in the clause *ἡ σκοτία παράγεται καὶ τὸ φῶς ἤδη φαίνει*, which, to those who know the Gospel of St. John, includes the notion of a contest between light and darkness, God and Satan.

Thus with the *ἔγραψα* of ver. 13*c* there begins an altogether new section of the Epistle, which first of all

resumes the presuppositions of the apostle uttered at the close of the first part, in order to carry them onwards to further uses. But, after the Johannaean manner, this resumption takes place not in exactly the same words. In the place of the forgiveness of sins, which was attributed to the church as a whole in ver. 12, comes in here the knowledge of the Father. When we mark that in the section commenced with these words the χρίσμα from God, and the *knowledge* of the truth thus guaranteed, forms the conclusive particular in the apostle's argumentation, that the whole subject is the separation from the antichrists, and the *marks* by which they are to be known, it is very evident why the apostle describes fellowship with God under the precise aspect of the *knowledge* of the Father. This knowledge of the Father falls in ver. 14 again into two elements: the knowledge of the Son, and victory over the evil one. Like the forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of God also has two sides, one more theoretic and the other more practical; yet so that the former is the foundation or presupposal of the latter. The latter is the conflict against sin resting upon the knowledge of the good and holy will of God; and it is pre-eminently ascribed to the young men. They are, in virtue of their knowledge of God, or, more strictly, in virtue of their living insight into His nature as light, ἰσχυροί: the knowledge that they stand not alone, but that the strength of the light works in them, and on them, and for them, makes them strong; further, the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ abides in them, the living and effectual message of Jesus Christ and about Jesus Christ, the concrete substance of the γνῶσις τοῦ πατρός, has found a place in them; and, finally, through this divine power, which lies in the divine word, they have maintained a victorious contest against the darkness and its prince. On the other hand, the γνῶσις τοῦ πατρός has also a more theoretical side; the repose of age and the experience of the Christian life have matured this in the fathers. They have known τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, that is, according to the explanation already given, the Son of God. The general fellowship with God, with the light, is specialized

into fellowship with the Saviour; he who knoweth God knoweth Him in His Son, who has said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

VERSE 15.

Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον, μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

Vers. 13*b*, 14 have laid the foundation of what now follows. The apostle has written only on the presupposition of their estate of Christian life and knowledge as just described: thus results for the churches the requirement to correspond with this presupposition; and this can be only through their absolute abnegation of the power of darkness and withdrawal from it. Hitherto the apostle has spoken positively on the whole; the negative clauses have been introduced only for the clearing of the thought. But now the order is inverted. No longer is the nature of *κοινωνία τοῦ φωτός* the matter of his theme, but the nature of the *σκοτία*. Now, in order to warn them against all and every fellowship with darkness, the author exhibits *in concreto* the form in which the darkness presents itself, where its kingdom is to be found, and therefore against what the Christ has to defend Himself. Hence, in the place of the more abstract and general idea of darkness, comes in the more concrete idea of the *κόσμος*, which is then again resolved into its elements and further developed. *Σκοτία* and *κόσμος* have the same substantial contents; but, while *σκοτία* is the animating principle, *κόσμος* is the domain in which this principle works; and they are related to each other as the soul and the body; the *κόσμος* becomes *κόσμος* through the *σκοτία* manifesting itself in it. Everything, however, is subjected to the power of darkness which generally is on earth, so far as it has not been renewed by grace; thus not only the world of mankind belongs to the *κόσμος*; the *ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός*, which is presently mentioned as an element of the *κόσμος*, does not always spring absolutely from man; the whole region of created things, as described in Gen. i. 2 seq., is subjected to sin. But, on the other hand, mankind belongs also to

the κόσμος, because mankind is absolutely and throughout entangled in sin. The counterpart of the κόσμος, as the kingdom of darkness, is that of the light, the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, the limits of which in the divine ordination and its final goal are precisely the same as those of the κόσμος, that is to say, the whole domain of the creation.

Thus between κόσμος and βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ there is precisely the same relation as there is in a narrower sphere between two similar antitheses or counterparts. Σῶμα, to wit, is a *vox media*, the corporeity of man purely of itself, apart from the power dominating in it. But σάρξ is that σῶμα so far as it is thoroughly penetrated and swayed by sinful powers; so far as it is, on the other hand, filled with divine energies, it is called a new or glorified body. Just so in regard to our present counterpart ideas. The *vox media*, which here corresponds to the σῶμα, is ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς, Ps. xxiv., the κτίσις, Rom. viii. 19. So far as this sum of created things is interpenetrated and swayed by the powers of darkness, it is called κόσμος; so far as it is, on the other hand, filled and animated by divine energies, it is called the new heaven and the new earth.

With the injunction not to love τὸν κόσμον is connected the further injunction not to love τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Two explanations may be given of this. It were most obvious to understand by it the objects present in the world, the things which collectively make up the idea of the κόσμος. But that would involve tautology. If it was the apostle's mind to make emphatic that we should love neither the world in general nor anything in particular belonging it, the expression chosen would not have been appropriate for that thought; instead of τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, it ought to have been μηδὲν τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, or something like it. However, the following verse makes it quite impossible to understand by τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ the particular objects existing in the world. That is to say, when ver. 16 begins with πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, it is manifest that this expression is equivalent to our τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ: what in the one case is comprehended in the neuter plural is in the

second case reduced to unity by the πᾶν. But when we read, further, that the ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός and τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, as also the ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, are the πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, we have given to us a fingerpost for the true interpretation of our expression. Those three terms are obviously not individual objects in the world, but the ethical quality adherent to those objects. It is true that ἐπιθυμία might express not the desire itself, but by metonymy the objects of the desire; yet the addition τῆς σαρκός, and still more τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, demands the former meaning; and certainly ἀλαζονεία can *only* be referred to an ethical subjective quality. Accordingly, we are not permitted to interpret the πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, and by consequence τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, of the objects which constitute the κόσμος. As in the expression, "that which is in man," we may understand not merely the individual attributes that are found in him, but also the characteristic quality which marks and expresses his whole life and nature; so also in our expression, "that which is in the world," we may understand the element that makes the world to be world, its fundamental determination and inmost nature. And this idea, as it comes *out of* the context, admirably fits *into* the context. That which makes the world into the κόσμος, with the New Testament meaning, is not any one object in it, but the sinful power inhering in all and pervading its collective whole. Thus the apostle says: Love not the world, the whole circle of objects comprised in it; and also love not—the μηδέ is thus as often ascensive in meaning—that which is in the world as its kernel and pith. The appended clause brings out and makes prominent that which makes the love of the world sin.

Before, however, St. John more closely in ver. 16 defines and specifies the general phrase τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, he indicates in the second half of ver. 15 how it is that the love of the world cannot accord with the presupposition of a Christian walk which gave him his reason for writing,—that is to say, because the love of the world and the love of God are absolutely incompatible. He says, ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρός: for

internal reasons we may decide against the reading *Θεοῦ*. This, indeed, appears at the first glance better to correspond with the general word *κόσμος*, and therefore was by some transcriber involuntarily substituted for the *πατρός*, which seemed to him without any point of connection. But, in fact, ver. 14 itself, as the fundamental beginning of one section, sprang from the *ἐγνωκέναι τὸν πατέρα*, and it is with allusion to that the apostle here resumes this word: "the fellowship in which I supposed you to exist ye do not then possess; and my letter does not at all apply to you." Moreover, this reference back to the fundamental idea of ver. 14 establishes clearly that the *ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρός* here does not denote the love of God to us, but our love to God.

VERSE 16.

Ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστί.

Very noteworthy and strictly Johannaean is the method of establishing the thought thus uttered, with which is at the same time connected a further explanation of the idea *τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*. The former takes the form of an emphatic repetition of what had been said, while the consequences involved in the matter itself are now brought out more tersely. This is the apostle's genuine method of demonstration. When we closely examine the thoughts themselves, we find that, first of all, he specifies the contents of *πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ* by the three definitions already mentioned, *ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός, ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου*. In the form we have a trichotomy, which, however, resolves itself into two parts, as the *ἐπιθυμία* is developed in two directions. The relation of the *ἀλαζονεία* to the *ἐπιθυμία* is easily perceptible: the latter presupposes a want, the former a possession; they are related as the desire for enjoyment, and the enjoyment of what is desired, but in such a way that the egoistic element is prominent. The *ἀλαζονεία* is not enjoyment in itself, but as connected with proud

contempt for others; and, in harmony with this, the ἐπιθυμία is not desiring in itself, but the desiring of what does not belong to me, the envying of others for the sake of self, though this may be an unconscious sentiment. *I* will have, and I as in contrast with others (ἀλαζονεία).

But not ἐπιθυμία and ἀλαζονεία alone are spoken of: they take a definite form. The desire is partly that of the flesh, partly that of the eyes. It is obvious that the eyes refer rather to an intellectual, psychical element of enjoyment; the flesh rather to enjoyment in the physical domain. With this it is connected that the flesh seeks rather active enjoyments, in which it is itself not merely the means of that enjoyment, but also the subject that enjoys; while the eye can only take up objects external and alien, and is viewed only as the medium of enjoyment. Active and therefore more sensual, passive and therefore more psychical, enjoyments are thus distinguished by the apostle. A similar isolating specification of the eye, which, however, one might say is already subjoined under the notion of σάρξ, but by which it gains a more independent position, we find in Matt. vi. 22. There the eye is set over against the whole body; and in such a way that its characteristic quality conditions that of the whole body. But this view of the matter is here, in conformity with the connection, left altogether out of view.

Similarly, the term ἀλαζονεία is more closely defined by the genitive τοῦ βίου. St. John uses this word only once more, ch. iii. 17, but in both passages, as throughout the New Testament, with definite distinction from ζωή. That is to say, like the verb βιόω of 1 Pet. iv. 2,—a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον in the New Testament,—the noun signifies only the external life of man as belonging to the material world, which is sustained by eating and drinking; on the other hand, the ζωή refers ever to the personality of life, the spiritual being of the man, thus forming a contrast to βίος: passages such as Luke xii. 15, xvi. 25, 1 Cor. xv. 9, and Jas. iv. 14, are no exceptions to this rule. But both βίος and ζωή occur, each in its several sphere as just indicated, with a twofold reference. As ζωή now describes the

natural personal life, and now that life as filled with the divine eternal life; so *βίος* is sometimes used generally of the natural life in itself, and sometimes of the powers which fill and sustain it,—that is, of the sustentation of life. In ch. iii. 17 it is to be understood without doubt in the latter sense: how here, is a question. The passage of this same Epistle just mentioned would recommend us to attach to it here the same narrower meaning; but, on the other hand, there is nothing in this passage to indicate such a restriction, while such a restriction of the idea is not in harmony with the context, which points to the widest possible interpretation. Not only rich nourishment, but all the good of the present external life, high position, money, honour, and the like, give sustentation to the *ἀλαζονεία*. But the word *βίος* is chosen, because the life of the natural man is after all only a purely external life. As the natural man is called *σάρξ*, although he has also the natural human spirit, because the flesh has the dominion, and even the most seemingly spiritual interests stand in the long run under the empire of corporeity impregnated with sin; so the whole life is here called *βίος*, because the pride and exultation in honour, personal consideration, and other apparently spiritual things, are in reality nothing but the same hanging on and cleaving to the things of the created, material world, although in another form. As selfishness may sometimes deny itself, and postpone its pleasure, and appear as self-renunciation; so the *ἀλαζονεία* may sometimes assume the forms of a higher life, although it fundamentally springs from the *σάρξ* and its life, the *βίος*. Now this double desire and this pride are said to be *πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*. Or may they be only examples of what is in the world, individual examples of the *πᾶν* in the beginning of the verse? In favour of this it may be said that the dependence on false teachers, presently spoken of, certainly belongs to the *κόσμος*; while yet it cannot be dovetailed into the specimens here adduced. But that would be unsound argument. For the anti-Christian nature is not independent of the *ἀλαζονεία* and the *ἐπιθυμία*; it is only the

concrete form into which these run, and it grows out of them directly. All else that may be mentioned is only the development of these germs.

But that we may exhibit in all their clearness the thoughts of the apostle, we must once more return and fasten our thought upon the idea of the κόσμος. We have seen that the creation and all it contains is not of itself called κόσμος, but only as it is determined by sin and impregnated by sinful forces. This sinful characteristic does not inhere in itself, but it becomes partaker of it through the fact that man makes it the instrument of his sin. Hence also its nature and essence is presented as a subjective one; the ὀφθαλμοί and σάρξ which desire belong to man, and the βίος is the sphere in which the man absorbs that from the earthly creation which he had taken into his service, and has consequently also a subjective side. But in any case, the desire and the pride itself which proceeds from the eyes, the flesh, the life, is absolutely and altogether something subjective. Accordingly, the proper ground and substance of the idea κόσμος lie not in the things of the world, but in man, who uses them. But when, on the other hand, it is said that this desire and this pride are ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, the opposite seems to hold good; sin seems to be transferred to created things, and from them sinful desires and sinful pride seem to take their rise, and come into men. And this view we find elsewhere in Scripture. In Rom. viii. 19, 20, ματαιότης is ascribed to the irrational creature, which longs to be freed from it, and a δουλεία τῆς φθορᾶς under which it groans. And this, like much else in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, leads us to the thought of a change or depravation of the creature through sin. The world, which stood in no original contact with evil, is not only depraved by man in individual cases, or in virtue of specific sinful acts, but, as the originally sinless body of man was not only made into the organ of sin, but in consequence of sin evil so penetrated and pervaded it that it on its side also influences and makes sinful the spiritual life of man; so also the whole earthly creation has been drawn into the

kingdom of darkness, and exercises now a depraving influence on man, who had previously corrupted it. Man originally, or, more specifically, the flesh and the eye, lusted, and he perverted the creature to the service of pride; as the result of this, the world is so pervaded with sin, that out of itself now the lust that covets it and the provocation to pride proceed. The *ἐπιθυμία* and *ἀλαζονεία*, which originally sprang from man, now proceed from the world, and thereby it becomes in the scriptural sense the *κόσμος*; thereby all that is the *τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*, the evil principle filling the creature, may be said to come *ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου*. And it is this very thing that it is the apostle's purpose to emphasize in one verse: he has said in the verse preceding that love to the world and to that which is in it, as its moving principle, cannot consist with the love of God. The evidence thus lies in the progression from that which is *ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ* to the *ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου*. The difference of origin between love of God and love of the world affirms and establishes the all-pervading and ineffaceable opposition between the two for all time and for all stages of development.

VERSE 17.

Καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ· ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

The thought is assuredly carried onward by the introduction of a new element in ver. 17; but it is questionable whether the idea of ver. 16 or that of ver. 15 is developed further. If that of ver. 16, then we have here a second reason given for ver. 15: the love of God and the love of the world cannot agree together, because, first (ver. 16), their origin is diametrically opposite; because, secondly (ver. 17), their end is equally diverse. Nevertheless, it seems more appropriate to regard it as developing ver. 15: love not the world (ver. 15*a*); for, first (vers. 15*b*, 16), the love of the world is incompatible with the love of God; and, secondly (ver. 17), ye would, loving it, perish with the world, while obedience towards God brings eternal life as its result. The *παράγεσθαι*, which is here asserted con-

cerning the world, is not absolutely identical with that which in ver. 8 is predicated of the *σκοτία*, although *κόσμος* and *σκοτία* are, as we have seen, equivalent ideas. It was said in that verse that in the present state the darkness is, in virtue of the appearance of the true light, in process of passing away; this, therefore, is a fact stated. But here it is asserted that the world in itself pertains to transitoriness, and this denotes an internal quality or characteristic. That which turns away from the light is on that account devoted to inevitable ruin; for only the *φῶς* is the *ζωὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*. But this germ of death, existing in it potentially from the beginning, comes into actuality when the light strikes upon it with its full power; for, as it produces life where the germs of life are, so it produces death where they are not.

And with the world passes away also its essential nature, *ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ*. This, in harmony with the connection, does not mean the desire towards the world, but the desire resting or abiding in the world, and constituting its signature and mark. How it is in very deed the nature of the world appears most clearly from the antithesis, the *ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ*. The lust here is the life creaturely which makes itself independent. According to the original divine ordinance, there should be no individual desire personal to self, no knowledge or will of our own, but only a will responsive to what God wills. Hence the idea, *θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, does not by any means enter here without introduction; it is the necessary antithesis of the *ἐπιθυμία* after the creaturely life which would constitute itself independent. But with the world its own desire must cease. That is precisely the condemnation, that the possibility of sinning ceases because the material of its activity is taken away from sin; and so, the *θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ* not being the power of life in the man, his existence becomes a fearful waste, devoid of all substantial contents. But it is far otherwise if the divine will has become my will; because the willing of God is infinite, an inexhaustible spring of ever new invigoration and confirmation of life, consequently to the life of the man who makes God's will

his own there is given an infinite matter, a never-ceasing series of aims and problems; and therefore he *μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. There is hardly another example of the transformation of Greek ideas by Christianity equally suggestive with that given by the word *αἰών*. While the Hebrew עוֹלָם, translated, as is well known, by this *αἰών*, signifies at least, in its proper original meaning, the dark futurity, lost in the distance, *αἰών* originally referred simply to the limited and definitely measured continuance of a certain period (*aevum*). The New Testament has not only given it the meaning of a long continuance,—a meaning it had obtained also in classical Greek,—but it has used it to express the idea of timelessness.

As in the previous section of the Epistle, ch. ii. 3–11, the apostle adopts the course of starting from altogether general ideas (*αἱ ἐντολαὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ*), and then lighting on the specific commandment of brotherly love, so also it is here. In what immediately precedes he has treated of the *κόσμος* as the opposite generally to the kingdom of light; he now passes over to the development and potentiality which the *κόσμος* has received in consequence of the appearance of the *φῶς ἀληθινόν*,—that is to say, he proceeds to the expression of anti-Christianity. For most certainly the light has, according to ch. ii. 8, the power to bring about the passing away of darkness; but that takes place only through the fact that first of all the *κόσμος* developes its enmity to the light to the utmost extreme, and reveals itself as perfectly dark. As sin becomes through the law exceeding sinful, or sin in reality, so the darkness becomes truly dark through the contrast to the perfect light. It is precisely through its own internal development and energizing that the darkness in very truth puts an end to itself.

VERSE 18.

Παιδία, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστί· καὶ, καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ὁ Ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν· ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.

This is the general relation of the following verses

to those which precede. They are closely attached to ver. 17. The exhortation to keep themselves unspotted from the world is all the more urgent, because the final decision and separation is immediately before the door. And this thought of the solemnity of the time, which makes it doubly necessary *μὴ ἀγαπᾶν τὸν κόσμον*, moves the apostle with all the vehemence of his love to appeal to the churches; hence the repeated address, *παιδία*.

"It is the last hour." What is it this expression would say? *Ἐσχάτη ὥρα* is not a phrase current in the New Testament, though with the same meaning we have *ἔσχαται ἡμέραι*, Acts xi. 17, 2 Tim. iii. 11, Jas. v. 3; or *ἔσχατον τῶν ἡμερῶν*, Heb. i. 1, Jude 18, 2 Pet. iii. 3, as well as *καιρὸς ἔσχατος*, 1 Pet. i. 3. These expressions correspond collectively to the Old Testament phrase אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים, as partly a comparison of the Septuagint, partly the quotation in Acts ii. 17, will show; but it is the expression *ἔσχατον τῶν ἡμερῶν* which formally and most exactly answers to the Hebrew. The precise meaning which the phrase in question bears is very various, no doubt, when understood *in concreto*. Whilst in Gen. xlix. the taking possession of the promised land is indicated by the end of the days, the same expression in Mic. iv. and Isa. ii. points to the time of Christ's first manifestation, and in 1 Pet. i. 5 it refers to eternity. This variety of interpretation must be explained by the fact that Holy Scripture everywhere knows only a dichotomy in this matter of times: the period of the introductory preparations of salvation and that of its consummation. The latter is in the Old Testament denoted by אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים.

Now, every new period, every important event in the history of the kingdom of God, contains a new germ of final development, a marked progress towards the end. When the eye looks into the future, those new potencies in that future strike it first which are not yet contained in the present, and in consequence of which it believes that with the new period the final development will enter. If the predicted period has actually come, then to those who live in it the new elements, the germs of development, recede

further into the future, and the imperfect and unaccomplished which still lingers in it assumes its worst form and in the clearest light. And hence the new period will come to be reckoned in with the first of the two halves of time, and the אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים will retire back into the futurity. Both views have accordingly their full justification. Every age, looked at from the past, belongs to the end; looked at from the present, it belongs to the beginning. The present has never an eye for the procedures and gradual growth of things in the time following; it has no eye but for the unity of the future end. The manifoldness in this distant goal, which is to be unfolded in sequences of events, is hidden from its view. So Jacob beholds the possession of the holy land and the future of the Messiah in one great picture: to him both belong to the *ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις*. When the land was laid waste, the germ which was in that fulfilment receded further, and the development of the end passed into a later futurity. Thus the earlier prophet beheld deliverance from the captivity as one with the final deliverance through the Messiah; and though it was revealed to Daniel how long was the interval between these, the entire prophecy of the Old Testament, down to Malachi and even the time of Christ, nevertheless combined together in one vision the incarnation of God and the coming to judgment, the יוֹם נָדוֹל וְנוֹרָא of Mal. iv. as the אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים.

It must not seem strange, then, if, in harmony with all this, the New Testament pushes further back the *ἔσχαται ἡμέραι*, and understands them of the second appearance of Christ. This is decisively the case in 1 Pet. i. 5, where the future glorification is assigned to the *καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ*, where also the present epoch is reckoned as the first. But in the other New Testament places the idea of the *ἔσχατον τῶν ἡμερῶν* appears to us to depart more widely from that of the Old Testament. That is to say, because in the Old Testament the entire eschatology, the immortality of the soul, and so forth, retired far back, so also did that of eternity, and of the endless development of the world. But the more clearly the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* was unfolded to Christians, the less adequate was to them the use of the phrase *ἔσχαται*

ἡμέραι to express the infinite fulness of what was in their expectation; the endlessness of an eternal life would no longer be fitly described by the definition, "end of the times." To this concurred also, that the view of the Old Testament, just indicated, to the effect that the אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים would come in with a mighty break in the passing away of heaven and earth, was brought forward both by the eschatological discourses of our Lord and the explanations of the apostles into the foreground; and that therefore it must have appeared far more befitting to describe the עוֹלָם הַבָּא as a new beginning, instead of the end, as was natural in the Old Testament. Hence, while the אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים in the Old Testament was equivalent to עוֹלָם הַבָּא, it becomes in the New Testament, for the reasons assigned, a constituent element of the *νῦν αἰών*, and that as its last period, its last stage of development. In this way we can explain such passages as 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2 Pet. iii. 3, Jude 18, easily and without violence. They speak of the stage of development which precedes the *αἰὼν μέλλων*.

But in our present passage and in Jas. v. 3 there is this peculiarity, that the apostolical period itself—not any as yet future epoch—is described as the *ἐσχάτη ὥρα*, or, what is substantially the same, as *ἔσχαται ἡμέραι*; and even Heb. i. 1 seems to belong to the same category, where the *ἔσχατον τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων*, that is, *τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, begins at once with the incarnation of Christ. This introduced the concluding epoch of the present world; when it runs out there does not enter a new epoch, but the *αἰὼν μέλλων*, the second great half of time, that of fulfilment; of all the stages that prepare for this, the present is regarded as the last. And in fact this view has been hitherto corroborated by experience: from the manifestation of Christ down to the present day there is running out a great epoch which will not reach its end but with the *ἀποκατάστασις πάντων*.

But this does not exhaust the meaning of the expression in our passage. For when we consider carefully with what sedulity the apostle here makes prominent the end of the world as the motive of his exhortations, how he intensifies and sharpens the usual phrase *ἔσχαται ἡμέραι* into *ἐσχάτη ὥρα*,

we are at once penetrated by the feeling that he beholds this last preparatory fraction as hastening to its end, and the final catastrophe as impending,—in other words, that he, like St. Paul, as we well know, expected within brief limits the end of the world. Nor can we say that this was an error which he himself corrected in the composition of the Apocalypse, showing there as he does how much was to take place before the Lord's return; for, notwithstanding these its contents, the book introduces the final and definitive utterance of Christ to this plain effect, *ἔρχομαι ταχύ*. Accordingly, we also must confront the much-agitated question, how an apostle, who had like St. John so deeply penetrated into the process of development of the kingdom of God, could nevertheless cling to such a view as this? For the solution of this difficulty it is necessary, before all things, not to lose sight of the fact that the Scripture has for the process of the times a standard of measurement different from ours: it measures them not by their length, but according to their weight and importance; not according to their external matter, but according to their internal meaning. Expressions like those now before us can be understood only when we interpret them according to the canon of 2 Pet. iii. 8, *μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς ἔτη χίλια καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία*. But that tells us no other than this, that in the divine estimation one day may wrap up in itself a thousand human years, and the converse. Now if, with the Scripture, we measure time by its contents, it is clear that the essential meaning of no epoch has been so perfectly condensed into its beginning as that of the epoch in which we live, and which had its commencement with the manifestation of Christ. With the substance of the Gospels, the life of the Lord, and the outpouring of His Spirit, its essential and proper meaning and substance were already given. According to the adduced passage of the second Epistle of St. Peter, objective hindrances to the coming of the world's end are no longer present; but through Christ's appearance the world is already ripe for it. Only the *ἀνοχή* of God protracts the last hour, deferring it to a later and later period; and precisely because every

moment has in it the possibility of the end, and only the long-suffering of God, unaccountable to every other, makes the finger of the dial go more slowly, no man knows in heaven or earth the day and the hour of the end.

But if this be so, it is the true Christian and apostolical wisdom to keep before our keen vision this possibility, we might even say this objective probability, of the judgment of the world. The end of all things will judge concerning the good as concerning the evil; both must therefore have found their full development. The former took place with Christ's manifestation; but the latter also: the power of distinction had reached its climax in the τέκνοις τῆς ἀπειθείας, as the rising up of the ἀντίχριστοι proved. This was to the apostle the sign of the approaching end; now was he assured that the axe was already laid at the root of the tree. Its development was quite complete: the fruits might indeed ripen more and more, but no new fruits would yet spring forth. Thus there may be, to speak with the Apocalypse, silence for half an hour, or, according to human measurement, of half an eternity: potentially the development is consummated; at any moment both Christ and Antichrist may appear, and the decisive stroke may follow the placing of the axe at the root of the tree. All peoples and individuals who have become Christians since the apostle wrote this, all the developments of the Christian church, are but the growth and ripening of germs then present, with nothing new superadded. Thus we have two things in the present verse, according to the explanation given: one is that we stand in the last period before the αἰὼν μέλλων; and the other, that it is already advanced to the top of its development, and therefore hastens to its end. And both are true.

As the token by which the readers may know the time, the antichrists are expressly mentioned. They had heard of *the Antichrist* as of a unity; but they may see *the antichrists* as a plurality. It is a question how these expressions are related to each other: whether ὁ ἀντίχριστος is an ideal combination of many antichrists which in concrete form will never show himself; or whether οἱ ἀντίχριστοι are only the forerunners of that one whose near coming their

appearance foreannounced. When we first of all examine what our own Epistle affords for the decision of this question, we see that the four passages which mention Antichrist (1 John ii. 18 and 22, iv. 3, 2 John 7) contain no irrefragable argument on the one side or the other. For if, first of all, in our passage the πολλοὶ ἀντίχριστοι are supposed to furnish demonstration that the last hour was at hand or come, then, indeed, it is possible to argue that in them "the Antichrist," the anti-Christian nature, had manifested itself, and that therefore there was no further individual to be expected who should exhibit personally the might of anti-Christianity. On the other hand, the apostle may have meant to say: "As we already see many antichrists in vigorous activity, we thereby discern that the scene is fully prepared for the appearance of the one personal Antichrist. In these he is foreshadowed and predicted; and we have therefore entered on the period of his manifestation, into the last hour." In fact, not only are both interpretations possible, but there is literally nothing in this passage of ours which suggests anything for or against either distinctively. The same may be said of ver. 22. There the characteristic of Antichrist is declared to be the denial of the Father and of the Son; and it is evident that such a characteristic was manifested fully and clearly in those antichrists. But beyond this nothing is said as to whether or not all the rays of enmity against the kingdom of God may hereafter be concentrated and reflected from one individual: the words do not exclude the possibility; the necessity, however, they do not include. In ch. iv. 3 Antichrist is described as the spirit of negation; there all pertain to Antichrist who deny the incarnate Son of God; and anti-Christianity is pre-eminently a principle. But neither does this passage absolutely shut out the possibility that one man, surpassing all the forms in which the anti-Christian element has been manifested, and summing up in himself the whole power of darkness, may hereafter appear,—that is, that the personal Antichrist may come. Finally, in 2 John 7 it is said that the denial of the incarnation is the token of *the* deceiver and of *the* Antichrist, it

having been just before said explicitly that *many* become guilty of that great sin of denial: hence it is clear that Antichrist primarily was understood to signify a principle, that of unbelief, and not an individual person. Wherever this principle exists, there is Antichrist. But is the thought thereby excluded, that this principle may hereafter be embodied in one person after such a manner that all earlier forms of manifestation shall be thrust into the background, so that this one individual might be designated ὁ ἀντίχριστος in the same way as, for instance, Christ Himself was called ὁ προφήτης? Thus we may confidently assert that, on the ground of Johannaean passages alone, we should not be constrained to expect a personal Antichrist; but rather that the apostle, especially in the last two passages quoted above, understands, and would have us understand, by ὁ ἀντίχριστος the personified anti-Christian principle working in all the variety of its individual manifestations. But should we have other reasons for assuming that such an individual person is to be looked for hereafter, there is certainly nothing in the passages written by St. John to contradict such an expectation: collectively, they allow the possibility of assuming, together with the preliminary reflections of the anti-Christian spirit, a yet future and final personal consummation of them all.

Further, there is an argument against the theory of a concentration of anti-Christianity in one person in the very diverse pictures which Scripture sketches of the final destination, and which on a first glance at least seem hardly compatible with a living individualization in one person. For, while in our Epistle anti-Christianity bears a theological character, resting upon a denial of the incarnation of God in Christ, and as such originating within the church itself (ἐξῆλθον ἐξ ἡμῶν, ver. 19), in the Apocalypse it distinctly assumes a twofold physiognomy: one, that of the many-headed beast, that is, of the God-opposed power of the world, which is established in direct contradiction to Christianity; and the other, that of the beast like a lamb, which corresponds to pseudo-prophecy, and thus has some affinity with the anti-Christianity of our passage.

While one of these beasts goes forth from the world, the other goes forth from the church. All this seems plainly to indicate two totally distinct forms of the corruption, which could hardly be combined in one person.

But when we compare 2 Thess. ii. the matter assumes another aspect. It is obvious that St. Paul borrowed the colours of his description from the prophet Daniel; and we must accordingly think of his man of sin as, according to the analogy of Daniel, a worldly potentate. It is equally plain that he speaks, on the other hand, of a great *ἀποστασία* out of which the son of perdition should emerge; and that leads at once to a corruption within the Christian church: the enemy sitteth in the temple of God, and as God exacts worship, which points at least in a pseudo-prophetic direction. The two diverse presentations of the beast in the Apocalypse are thus combined by St. Paul into one sole picture; and the Apocalypse itself gives us a hint how that comes to pass when it says, ch. xiii. 15, *ἐδόθη αὐτῷ* (that is, to the beast representing pseudo-prophecy) *δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου.* According to this, the hostile ungodly power of the world receives the spirit of pseudo-prophecy *opposed* to God; and it is not until then—that is, until both forms of opposition are united in one—that this enmity is raised to its highest form of activity. But again, 2 Thess. ii. is so constructed that we can hardly escape the conviction that it speaks of an individual in whom the *ἀποστασία* should be consummated. To this all the expressions used by St. Paul point; in the other case the singular would not be constantly used as it is; but the real multiplicity lying at the base of it would somewhere appear, as it does, for instance, in St. John, who in fact has primarily a principle in view.

With all this perfectly corresponds the fact, which the Scripture gives us to discern in the ways of God, that every principle is finally presented in its concentration in one person. As the "ideal righteous man" of the Old Testament is not a mere abstraction, finding its full realization only in the sum of all the individual righteous, but in Him whom

our Epistle, ch. ii. 2, terms δίκαιος κατ' ἐξοχήν finds its concrete and full manifestation; as the עֶבֶד יְהוָה is not only the type and ideal of a true servant of God, but has found its final concrete realization in Christ: so also the power of darkness will have its climax in a person who will fulfil all that has been predicted concerning Antichrist.

We have felt it necessary briefly to indicate the true doctrine of Antichrist, because a new question attaches itself here to the subject. If, to wit, a personal Antichrist is yet to be expected, and if, moreover, St. John must have known this and would have it known, the reason must needs be assigned why he altogether keeps out of his Epistle this view of the case, and, after the single mention of ὁ ἀντίχριστος, which did not positively require it, yet at once occupies himself with the πολλοὶ ἀντίχριστοι generally, with anti-Christianity as a principle. But the reason of this it is not hard to discover. That a personal Antichrist was to be expected, had its importance to Christianity at that time only so far as the end of all things was not immediately impending, this being proved by his appearance not having yet taken place. It is with this significance that St. Paul alludes to it, in order to obviate misconceptions as to the approaching and instant end of the world. But our apostle follows an altogether different line, having a different end in view: it is his purpose to show not the distance, but the nearness of the world's consummation; and therefore he could not make prominent what was *yet* to take place, but must point out that all *had* taken place which was previously to take place. Hence he says nothing about the concentration of evil still in the future, but dwells on the fact that the antichrists already existing foreannounce that highest climax. Prominence given to Antichrist as one person might well have produced a relaxing effect: there is time enough to be in deep earnest about perfect holiness until we see him come. But the conclusion, that τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀδικίας ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται, is a strong exhortation to the utmost possible holy earnestness. Now, as the apostle must, according to the design of this Epistle, have felt himself moved to give pro-

minence to this latter aspect, so it is in harmony with his general habit, instead of placing the final consummation of the evil in contrast with its present imperfectness, rather to place in a strong light the germs of that consummation already appearing in the present. Thus we find it in his Gospel, and with specific reference to the final judgment. When our Lord, in ch. v. 25, says, *ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστι ὅτι οἱ νεκροὶ ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ζήσονται*, He by no means refers only to the bodily raising of the dead which He accomplished during His life, but to the internal judgment which already takes place in virtue of His manifestation. So also when, in ch. iii. 17 seq., He makes it emphatic that the unbeliever is not to be judged first when he stands before the bar, but that he is already because of his unbelief condemned.

The apostle terms the great enemy of the Lord and His principle *ἀντίχριστος*. Now it is certain that in the earlier classical Greek most compounds with *ἀντί* signify not merely an opponent of the idea contained in the simple noun, but such an opponent as would fain make himself also what the simple noun means, and be so termed himself. *Ἀντιβασιλεύς* is not the enemy of a king, but a king who declares himself the enemy of another king; *ἀντιπαλαιστής* is not the opponent of a wrestler, but a wrestler who contests the place of another wrestler. Accordingly, *ἀντίχριστος* would not be a mere enemy of Christ, but such an opponent as himself claims to take the place of Christ. Thus the term *ἀντίχριστος* would be an equivalent of the *ψευδόχριστοι* of whom the Lord speaks in Matt. xxiv.; and it would be in strict accordance with this that in 2 Thess. ii. the man of sin puts himself in the temple of God, that he might be worshipped in the place of God, or, as we should say here, in the place of Christ. But if this applies very well to the one personal Antichrist, it does not apply to the many antichrists of whom St. John here speaks. These, so far as we know, never made pretension to be honoured equally with Christ; nor does the mark of the anti-Christian spirit, which is laid down in ver. 22 and ch. iv. 3, agree with it, for that was only the

denial of Christ, and therefore enmity to His person. Now the usage above referred to does not hinder our taking ἀντίχριστος also in its wider meaning of an opponent of Christ; for that usage refers only to substantives, and there is no reason why ἀντίχριστος should not be taken as an adjective. Thus, as ἀντίθυρος means that which is over against the door, so would ἀντίχριστος mean anti-Christian, that which is set in opposition to Christ. In precisely the same way is ἀντιβάρβαρος constructed.

That the name Antichrist occurs only in St. John has this ground, that this apostle regards him specifically as the opponent of Christ, as is seen in ch. iv. 3, 2 John 7, ἀρνούμενος Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐληλυθότα ἐν σαρκί, while St. Paul emphasizes his enmity against everything divine, and more general names, such as ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας, suggested themselves more obviously to him. In fact, these are only diverse aspects of the same thing differently presented here and there. St. John's description helps us, moreover, in the examination of the course of thought in our passage. In what preceded, the exhortation was to preserve themselves unspotted from the world as the general sum and substance of the spirit contrary to God; here, the apostle proceeds onward to a warning against the specific embodiment of the κόσμος in anti-Christianity. The beast has become one with the pseudo-prophecy.

Concerning the coming of Antichrist,—and after what has been said, we must think here of the personal Antichrist,—the church had already heard. But from whom? It has been usual to refer at once to the passage in the Thessalonians so often quoted. But though it is not improbable that, at the time when St. John wrote, that Epistle had already found its way into Asia Minor, yet this allusion is rendered doubtful by the consideration that in such a case the apostle would have kept closer to the Pauline expression. Still less tolerable is the reference to Daniel; for the figure the prophet draws of the man of sin traces other features than those which here come into view. Thus we are led to assume that the words point to certain instructions given by St. John himself or by other teachers

to the churches concerning the eschatological discourses of Christ, and especially those about the ψευδόχριστοι and ψευδοπροφῆται in Matt. xxiv. They had heard that Antichrist cometh; and by the previous words, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, as well as by the matter itself, it had been more closely defined that he would appear in the last age. At the same time, then, that they knew the coming of Antichrist, and indeed his coming ἐν ἐσχάτῃ ὥρᾳ, they also see καὶ νῦν many antichrists: the καί refers to the congruence of the then present time with the time for which the Antichrist was presented prominently to their view. And since there were so many of them already, this was all the more plain an indication that the last hour had actually struck; that the anti-Christian principle had already attained to its mighty energy. For the rest, we have probably in the words of the apostle a subtle indication of the fact that he did not in the πολλοῖς ἀντιχρίστοις already contemplate the one Antichrist, but only the preparation for his appearance. If he had meant the former, he would have used some such words as ἠκούσατε, ὅτι ὁ ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, νῦν δὲ καὶ πολλοὶ ἀντίχριστοι γεγόνασιν,—that is, in the many the prophecy was abundantly fulfilled—not one alone, but many had appeared. But inasmuch as he does not admit into his words this intensifying sense, he points to the idea that the many antichrists were not an intensification, but rather a diminution of the one Antichrist.

VERSE 19.

Ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθον, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν, μεμενήκεισαν ἂν μεθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶ πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.

The warning to Christians to be on their guard against this enemy was all the more needful, because the antichrists came forth from the bosom of the church itself: on the one hand, it is evident how these Christians might themselves be entangled in their corruption; and on the other hand, their earlier connection with these men suggested the danger of their being willing to remain in fellowship with them notwithstanding their anti-Christian spirit. There is

a peculiarly painful feeling breathed in the words of this nineteenth verse. If to any men the apostle's appeal in ch. iv. 16 applied, that they were not to be prayed for, it might appear that these antichrists were the people. Nevertheless, he manifestly looks upon them with sorrowful sympathy, with the same sympathy which we observe in our Lord when He remembers in His high-priestly prayer the *υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας*. The antichrists, like Judas their type, had once been in another relation to the church of Christ: *ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν*. This may be understood in the sense of *exierunt*, but also in the sense of *prodierunt;* either that they left us, or that they sprang up in our midst. The former view is distinctly opposed by the following *ἀλλά*. It would be an illogical thought that they have separated from us, *but* they were not of us: we should have expected in that case a *γάρ*. This conjunctive requires us to take *ἐξῆλθαν*, as in Acts xv. 24, in the sense of origination: *prodierunt a nobis*. They have indeed gone out from among us, they stand in historical connection with us, but *οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν*; inwardly they have always been estranged from us; for if they ever had belonged to us, they would not have been able to leave us. He who goes back into the world has never perfectly broken with the world. It follows from what is said here, that not the denial, but the renunciation of Christianity is the essential nature of Antichrist: the light has come upon him, has touched him, but *ἡ σκοτία οὐ κατέλαβεν αὐτό*. With a brachylogical turn the apostle goes on: *ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσι ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶ πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν*. The *ἀλλά* is most easily supplemented by *ταῦτα γέγονεν*; and this *ἀλλ' ἵνα* is not unusual with St. John: compare John xiii. 18, xv. 25; but not John xiv. 31, where the close of the verse *ἐγείρεσθε κ.τ.λ.* is not to be separated from the preceding, as in the *Text. rec.*, by a point, but forms the main sentence belonging to *ἀλλά*. The apostle says that it was the divine purpose that the anti-Christian spirit which clung to the church should in the course of time be revealed, should be made known as such, and thus the congregation be cleansed from it. The divine purpose is

represented as seen only in the φανερωθῆναι, and not in the existence of the anti-Christian element itself. Predestinarian theories can be no more extracted from the sentence than they can be refuted by it; for, in fact, such questions are altogether out of the scope of the passage. The presentation of the design is here entirely the same as in the words of the psalmist (Ps. li. 6): הָרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדָבְרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְשָׁפְטֶךָ. David there does not by any means attribute his being evil to any determination of God, but the *doing* of sin, the expression of his interior evil. The meaning is, that if I had not fallen into any of these courses of wickedness, and Thou hadst nevertheless punished me, that would have been perfectly righteous; for only the expressions of my evil nature would have been wanting, because the opportunity was wanting; myself would then have been as evil as I am now. But my punishment would then have had the semblance of injustice, because my sin would have been perfectly known only to myself, and not to another. But now hast Thou let me fall into dreadful guilt, Thou hast let my heart's evil be brought to light, that Thy judgment might be seen to be righteous. Thus, in the psalmist's words, not the being evil, but the manifestation of the evil was brought into act by God. So it is also here. It is not regarded as God's work that the antichrists were such as they were, but they unfolded their character as such; that the mask was withdrawn, and thus they were proved never to have belonged to the church. Thus the divine purpose in this clause refers not to the οὐκ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν, but to their manifest appearance and exhibition as antichrists, ver. 18. Formally, indeed, the telic clause is not constructed with exactness: the πάντες is embarrassing. The author does not mean to say that not all *anti-Christians* are ἐξ ἡμῶν: that would have been awkward, as they certainly are all of them not ἐξ ἡμῶν; but that these anti-Christian elements demonstrate that not all *Christians* are ἐξ ἡμῶν. The two ideas that all the antichrists are not, and that Christians are not all, belonging to the Christian church, are packed together into one, as often happens in ordinary phrase. Here it is with

ease explained if we assume that St. John, like St. Paul, was in the habit of dictating his Epistles.

Verse 20.

What the apostle now suddenly says of the χρίσμα of Christians seems to be in no immediate connection with what precedes. For if we should suppose the intention to be that of setting the true nature of Christians in contrast with that of the antichrists, we should expect the conjunction δέ instead of καί. It is obvious that the thought entering the context with ver. 20, that the Christian church possesses the χρίσμα and knows all things, is not a subordinate one, but introduces the whole of the ensuing dissertation. It will therefore be necessary to examine if we can find an element in the following context for which ver. 20 will be the simple preparation, and which in itself stands in organic connection with the statements made concerning the antichrists. The last idea prominently in our minds was that these antichrists had not remained in the church, but had separated from it. Now, that would obviously suggest the same exhortation or appeal which Christ uttered when, John vi. 66, many went no longer with Him: μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς θέλετε ὑπάγειν,—to wit, that at least the remainder are and will be faithful to the Lord's fellowship. And this idea of the μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ is palpably the very nerve of the entire remainder of the chapter. In ver. 24 it comes forward in all its strength and emphasis; in ver. 27 it is taken up again. The whole section is concerned with exhortation to Christians to keep themselves apart from the world; this is then rendered more specific as a requirement to guard themselves against antichrists, for the sin of Christian men leads immediately not only to the unchristian, but also to the anti-Christian spirit and life. But, as the essence of the spirit of the antichrists is apostasy or infidelity, the negative injunction to be on guard against them slides naturally round into the positive one of maintaining their faithfulness. He, however, who would maintain his fidelity must before all things know what that infidelity is by which faithfulness is wounded.

This is the lie; every lie greater or less. Such knowledge the readers have, the apostle tells them in vers. 20, 21, in virtue of the anointing of which they have been made partakers. The last words of ver. 21, *πᾶν ψεῦδος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας*, form the pith of the verses before us, vers. 20, 21: for the sake of them these were written, and they themselves, on the other hand, form a point of connection with what ensues. Thus we gain the following train of thought. Ye see the antichrists, whose principle is infidelity, acting out their nature (vers. 18, 19). Ye know further (our resolution of the order takes away any temptation to assign to the *καί* of the beginning of ver. 20 an adversative meaning; it rather introduces an actual and simple progression), in virtue of the anointing which ye have, that *πᾶν ψεῦδος* excludes from the kingdom of God the lie in any and every form, because it (ver. 21) is in the issue always a denial and renunciation of the Son of God. Ye, then, who are by the supposition of your anointing in a satisfactory condition to discern anti-Christian error, will assuredly avoid that error and approve your fidelity. Thus the whole section is lightened up, and vindicates for itself a simple but sure and orderly course of thought. The passage from ver. 20 to ver. 23 thus primarily indicates that the Christian church is in a position to discern and detect anti-Christian error down to its most subtle ramification. This it is by virtue of the *χρίσμα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου*.

VERSE 20.

Καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου, καὶ οἴδατε πάντα.

This idea rests of course upon the ceremony of anointing, everywhere so common in the Old Testament. It is well known that in Hebrew the word is rendered in two ways, by סוּךְ and by מָשַׁח: the former signifies always merely outward anointing, and for common uses; the latter is the unction as a symbol of religious consecration. So also the Septuagint has two words to reproduce the two Hebrew terms respectively, *ἀλείφειν* and *χρίειν*. It is generally said that the former corresponds always to the סוּךְ, and the latter to the מָשַׁח. This is certainly not exact, nor is it

absolutely and at all points borne out by an induction of instances. For, although we may not lay much stress on the fact that in Ezek. xvi. 9 סוך is translated by *χρίειν*, inasmuch as the translator might there have had in his mind a religious anointing, we find, on the one hand, *ἀλείφειν* used in Ex. xl. 15 of religious anointing, and, on the other, *χρίειν* used in 2 Sam. i. 21 of the anointing of a shield for the sake of greater smoothness, and thus without any concomitant religious idea (the similar anointing of the shield in Isa. xxi. 5 is *ἑτοιμάζειν*); as also classical Greek uses *ἀλείφειν* and *χρίειν* promiscuously and interchangeably. Appeal may be made to Ex. xl. 15, and it may be said that there the translator had in view only the external act of anointing; but when we find in the same verse, and concerning the same anointing, *χρίειν* afterwards employed, it is very obvious to infer that the distinction observed in the Hebrew is not carried out thoroughly by the translation. But, notwithstanding these individual exceptions, it remains true that *on the whole* *χρίειν* is used for religious anointing as such.

As to the substantives depending on the verb, *χρίσμα* is the only one used in the New Testament, and there only three times in this Epistle: the Septuagint has in connection with it *χρίσις* also. These last, however, have not quite the same signification: *ἔλαιον χρίσεως* is the oil with which I anoint; *ἔλαιον χρίσματος*, the oil with which I am anointed. *Χρίσμα*, absolutely used, thus signifies (compare with our passage Ex. xxx. 25, *ἔλαιον χρίσμα ἅγιον*) that with which we are anointed, or the oil of anointing.

If we pass from the application of the word to the meaning of the symbol, we are met by the expositors who point for the explanation of our passage to 1 Pet. ii. 9, *βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιόν ἐστε*, as if the *χρίσμα* signified the dignity and elevation of the Christian estate. But this exposition does not accord with the train of thought. How should the apostle, without any point of connection, without any bearing on what precedes or what follows, make such an allusion as this? Moreover, it is plain that, according to the close of this verse, the knowledge of the truth is the

subject treated of. Then it was neither the priestly nor the kingly, but the prophetic vocation of Christians that was involved; and the prophetic vocation is precisely that which could not be distinguished by the term χρίσμα. For, in the Old Testament, while priests and kings were anointed, prophets were not anointed. We find indeed the word once in 1 Kings xix. 16, where Elisha's institution to the prophetic office is referred to. But when we observe that in the succeeding very full narrative of the calling of Elisha, not a syllable of allusion to anointing occurs, and when we bear in mind that nowhere else and under no circumstances do we hear of prophets being anointed, we shall be disposed to prefer explaining the מָשַׁח in the cited passage as a breviloquence, or summary way of describing. The Lord commands that two kings be anointed, and thus consecrated to their office; when Elisha is mentioned, we have to eliminate from the anointing its peculiar idea of consecration and take that alone, understanding the expression as figurative. This one passage being cleared away, we have no shadow of right to refer the χρίσμα of this verse to the prophetic dignity or position of Christians.

We must rather make our starting-point the fact, that in the Old Testament not only persons, but things also—for instance, altars—were anointed. This, together with the connection which the Pentateuch loves to establish between anointing and ἁγιάζειν, shows that the anointing generally signifies the separation from profane or common to religious use. Accordingly the exposition will need to be modified by the thought that the anointing signifies the reception of the Holy Ghost. Certainly, in Isa. lxi. 1 this element is expressly declared; but it is obvious that neither altars nor vessels might receive the Spirit. This symbol was the preparation for the feasts; the oil pertained to the expression of festal and elevated feeling; hence in times of lamentation it was omitted. It is in such a meaning that the idea occurs in Matt. vi. 17. As a result of this, everything was anointed which was brought out of the profane and common world into fellowship with God. The fundamental meaning of the unction is that an object is withdrawn

from the domain of creaturely life, and is supposed to enter into sacred relation with God. At the stone which Jacob anointed, the Supreme revealed Himself to him; and it was marked out by him with oil as the place of that manifestation. The anointed altar was thereby declared to be a sacred spot at which God would enter into union with men, and place them through sacrifice in union with Himself.

Now, if persons are anointed, or separated from profane life to the service and to the revelation of God, that must assuredly take place through this, that the Holy Spirit of God works in them; and in such cases the anointing was the symbol of the impartation of the Spirit; but it is such only as a consequence of the fundamental idea of separation from common use; the fundamental meaning is always the same; and *χρίειν* is thus the symbolical expression for *ἁγιάζειν*. And in this passage of ours, that expression is to be understood as taken precisely in this sense. Undoubtedly, of course, the *χρίσμα* is here used for the reception of the Holy Ghost; for the *εἰδέναι πάντα, εἰδέναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, the derivation of the anointing unction from the Holy One, the resulting *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ*,—all this, too surely to leave any doubt, reminds us of the Lord's explanation touching the Paraclete whom He would send, whose office would be *ὁδηγεῖν εἰς πάσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, John xvi. 13, whose proceeding from the Father and the Son is there taught, and who is the bond of the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ*. But, on the other hand, all that does not make it clear why St. John should describe the Holy Ghost precisely here as *χρίσμα*; for the mere similarity of sound between it and *ἀντίχριστος* would be, after all, an altogether too external reason.

It is quite otherwise if we firmly hold fast the idea that separation from the profane is the real meaning of the symbol. The apostle is speaking pre-eminently of the separation of Christians from the world, especially from the world in its most perilous form as anti-Christianity. That separation was already accomplished in the church; through their participation in the Spirit they had been set apart from everything ungodly and opposed to God; and

this significance of the bestowment of the Holy Ghost He imprints on their souls by the descriptive *χρίσμα*. This separation was given them as their portion *ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου*. When we observe that the *χρίσμα* is to form the antithesis to the anti-Christian spirit, and therefore to the renunciation of Christ, not of the Father, we shall see fit to understand the *ἅγιος* here of the Son and not of the Father. He who Himself was indeed in the world, but yet not of the world, has also defended His own that they should not be mingled again with the world, John xvii. 16 seq. The whole contents of the high-priestly prayer generally gives sufficient confirmation of the truth of this exposition. What is here figuratively expressed by the *χρίσμα* is there expressed by the literal *ἁγιάζειν*. And as here the being released out of the lie through the knowing of the truth is regarded as the matter of the *χρίσμα*, so there the *ἀλήθεια* is the sphere in which the anointed are *ἡγιασμένοι*.

VERSE 21.

Οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλ' ὅτι οἴδατε αὐτήν, καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστι.

For it is not only as matter of fact that the church, through the anointing of the Spirit, is severed from the world to God: it is such also theoretically and in point of knowledge. They know through the Spirit's power how to distinguish truth itself from error: *οἴδατε πάντα*, the apostle adds. And what is first as to the form laid down as *πάντα*, is now as to the matter defined as *ἀλήθεια*: the latter is the concrete substance of the *πάντα*; it gives the quality and meaning of the *εἰδέναι*, as *πάντα* gives its range and comprehension. When studying ch. i. 6 we recognised the *ἀλήθεια* to mean the collective fulness of all real being which dwells in God, as the *πλήρωμα τοῦ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου*. So it is here; because Christians have the *χρίσμα*, and are brought over out of the world into the fellowship of God and His kingdom, therefore they also have a certain knowledge of all things that are in that divine kingdom and have to do with it; they know the

fulness of its possessions, with the powers and energies that work in it; and all this together is the ἀλήθεια. And indeed they know all things, and therefore πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν; because in the Spirit of God, whom they possess, all this fulness lies enfolded and hid; the possession of Him, therefore, includes, although ever so potentially alone, the whole compass of this knowledge.

But the εἰδέναι πάντα has another side to it, and that is found in the close of the verse, καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν. The καὶ ὅτι adjoins, that is, as is fully acknowledged by expositors, the matter of the following clause as a second and co-ordinate element in the knowledge of the truth. The first assertion, that Christians know the truth, is related to the second or new one, that they know also the incompatibility of every lie with that truth, just in the same way as the proposition, God is light, ch. i. 5, is related to the proposition that in Him is no darkness at all. The εἰδέναι πάντα includes a knowledge of the lie, which is here simply the knowledge concerning the absolute contrariety between it and the truth. Since there is such a thing as the lie, that is, seeming existence, to which all true and deep reality is wanting because it is sundered from God, the source and substance of the ζωή, therefore as well God as the man enlightened by God must take it up into consciousness as fact, though only as absolutely denying and rejecting it.

And this *absolute* negation of the lie it is which receives here the emphasis: the whole weight of the sentence rests upon the πᾶν ψεῦδος. The εἰδέναι πάντα is mentioned only in order to show that Christians are supposed in every particular case to know the difference between truth and lie; their knowing of the whole is to demonstrate that every part of the whole also lies in the sphere of their knowledge. The apostle's meaning is, that, let the lie show itself in what form it may, in great things or in small, in every instance ye know it as lie as certainly as ye know that ye are for ever separated from it.

Yet it is not the fact in itself that the apostle declares in ver. 21, that Christians know everything, and can dis-

tinguish the lie as lie; but his firm conviction of that fact, from which conviction and for the sake of which conviction generally he writes this Epistle, *ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οἴδατε*,— that is, by reason of this your knowledge, prompted by it, I have written. It is the very same kind of declaration as we found, vers. 13*c*, 14, in the beginning of this section. As in this passage *εἰδέναι πάντα* corresponds to *ἐγνωκέναι τὸν πατέρα* in that, as *εἰδέναι ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας* in this passage corresponds to the *νενικηκέναι τὸν πονηρόν* in that, so also the *ἔγραψα* in our present verse reproduces the same word in the former. In both cases the preterite or aorist refers back to the internal conception of the letter as a whole, the apostle speaking of that as of an historical fact preceding the actual external accomplishment of the purpose in writing; in both we might translate without impropriety, "I have brought myself to write." And in fact we may find good reason if we seek it for the reminder concerning the apostle's presupposition in writing the Epistle: as in the beginning of the section, so in this passage especially, the motive is obvious. The subject is the absolute and total turning away from the *κόσμος*: but this presumes that already a separation of the readers from the world has taken place; were that not the case, were the preliminaries for that now to be arranged, the apostle would have had to write in a very different way; something after the manner of St. Paul, in the first part of his Roman Epistle, concerning sin and its power of corruption and ruin. But he who would exhort to *μένειν ἐν τῷ φωτί*, must presuppose an *εἶναι ἐν τῷ φωτί* in those whom he exhorts. And in our passage particularly he would warn the church against every the least contact with the antichrists. But that presupposes in them the ability to detect the anti-Christian nature even in its most subtle expressions and ramifications (*πᾶν ψεῦδος*).

VERSE 22.

Τίς ἐστιν ὁ ψεύστης, εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.

The proposition, that *πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν*, seems at the first glance to be so perfectly clear and self-evidencing, that it needs at the utmost only to be expressed for the sake of logical completeness. But, however plain it may be to the theoretic consciousness, it very little governs the practical. With Christians in general, sin can be possible only through their forgetting that every, even the slightest lie (understood in St. John's full meaning), excludes from the truth. And how solemn is that assertion! It follows from it that *πᾶν ψεῦδος* leads directly into fellowship with the antichrist nature. This is the consequence which is deduced in ver. 22. All depends here upon rightly understanding the article in the clause *τίς ἐστιν ὁ ψεύστης*; the parallelism with the *ὁ ἀντίχριστος* in this second part of the verse would suggest at once that we must interpret this of the Antichrist himself, and to translate the article as meaning: who is the one true arch-liar? But this yields a very loose connection with what precedes. Hence it commends itself that we refer back the *ὁ ψεύστης* simply to the last words of ver. 21, and place *ὁ ψεύστης* in correlation with the *πᾶν ψεῦδος*. In what precedes, every lie was declared to bear witness that the *ἀλήθεια* has no place in the man who is the subject of it. That leads then further to the question: who makes himself thus partaker of such *ψεῦδος*? what is his spirit and nature, that it bears in itself such fearful consequences? The answer is: that is the liar,—the article thus indicates the liar as the person spoken of just before,—and his nature is that he does not acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. In the assertory form the proposition would run, *οὐκ ἔστιν ψεύστης εἰ μὴ κ.τ.λ.*

The interrogative form is adopted in order to indicate to the reader that the proposition concerned is one self-understood, resting upon the fact of his own consciousness, about which there can be no contest or doubt. The nature and moving principle of every lie (*πᾶν ψεῦδος*, ver. 21) is here declared. It is constituted by the strong *ἀρνεῖσθαι*: that is more than mere denying; it rather expresses that the denial is based on the ground of opposed and better con-

viction. We may compare John i. 20, where it is said of the Baptist, *ὡμολόγησεν καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσατο*,—that is, he gave to the truth, well known by him, its full honour. Thus the repudiation of Jesus as the Christ is the essence of every lie.

Two questions here emerge. One is, how far this may be regarded as the fundamental nature of the lie; and the other, how far this may be even accounted as equal to the only lie (*εἰ μή*). The former question is easily answered. If Jesus, to wit, is the truth, and that simply because He is the Messiah who was anointed by God with the Spirit without measure, then the denial of His Messiahship is not only the turning away from *a* truth, but a break with *all* truth; for He is the concentration of all truth, which is one with Him, and there is no other method of reaching the truth than He. But the other question is more difficult, as to this being the only lie; since even with the acknowledgment of the Messiahship of Jesus we may conceive many other falsehoods as to other regions of truth to be bound up. But that is only a false conception, and it seems so only so long as we think of a merely intellectual or theoretical acknowledgment of the Lord; which is never the case with St. John, who in ver. 14 connects the *ἐγνωκέναι τὸν Θεόν* immediately with the *νικᾶν τὸν πονηρόν*. As soon as we regard the confession of Christ as the power of spiritual life, which is supposed to sway the whole of man's being, it is natural to behold every lie, *πᾶν ψεῦδος*, any kind of fellowship with the ungodly, as a removal from Christ, a renunciation of Him as the Messiah,—that is, of Him who has the *χρίσμα οὐκ ἐκ μέτρου*, the full and perfect truth. As certainly as the slightest obliquity in the circumference of a circle causes the circle to be a circle no longer, disturbing the equal supremacy of the centre, so the slightest lie is a disturbance of the supremacy of Christ.

Every lie, be it fashioned however it may, has in its essence the denial of the Son of God. Hence, therefore—and that is the next proposition of the apostle—every lie is a direct participation in the antichrist nature; for the

ἀρνεῖσθαι ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός is the distinctive mark or token of Antichrist. Ὁ ψεύστης, that is, according to the explanation now given, every one who enters into fellowship with the lie, denies Christ; and thus the lie and the antichrist nature, and the liar and Antichrist, are one and the same. And, in order more vigorously to emphasize this identity of the two, the apostle repeats after the οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, once more in the form of an apposition, the element in common between the ψεύστην εἶναι and the ἀντίχριστον εἶναι: and that is, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.

Now, it is undeniable that the proposition, which we have thus derived from the whole, is of so extremely severe a character that it sounds almost repulsive. But it is equally clear that it thus presents the most urgent reason which the exhortation could bring forward in favour of utter severance from the Antichrist: he who in the least degree recedes from the ἀλήθεια falls away from fellowship with Christ, has denied Christ Himself, and has become a member of Antichrist. Now this, even apart from the stringency of the context, is a doctrine precisely conformable to the whole Johannaean view of things. There is no apostle who to the same extent, and with the same consistency, carries out the total severance between the world and the kingdom of God. The third chapter will give us occasion to bring forward abundant evidence of this. Commonly those men only are called antichrists who have openly displayed the sentiment of opposition to Christ, and in whom this sentiment rules the entire life. But here it is amply shown that every ψεῦδος involves this principle, and therefore internally makes men into antichrists, and the weight of the propositions asserted so peremptorily by the apostle is much augmented by the total absence of conjunctions: neither does a γάρ unite the first half of the verse with the twenty-first, nor does a δέ connect the second half with the first. The sentences fall on the reader's soul like notes of the trumpet. Without cement, and therefore all the more ruggedly clasping each other, they are like a cyclopaean wall.

VERSE 23.

Πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει· ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν, καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.

At the end of ver. 22 the apostle brought forward a new point, which has not in what precedes been demonstrated: the declaration, namely, that the Antichrist denied not only the Son, but the Father also. The twenty-third verse takes this up again with emphasis, in order that a due consideration may establish it as truth. Now, if no man hath ever seen God nor can see Him, but He is declared only by His only-begotten Son, it follows that he of necessity loses the knowledge of the Father who rejects the way in which alone it can be found. If Christ as the *ἀπαύγασμα* of the Father is equally with the Father the truth, it follows that he who has not the One cannot have the Other: else would he at once have and not have the truth. But that the Redeemer is not here, any more than at the close of the previous verse, called *Χριστός*, but *υἱός*, has its simple reason in the fact that He is placed in direct relation to the Father. At the same time, the choice of both terms points to the absolute and necessary unity and mutual indwelling of the Two, which affects that no man can be partaker of the One without being partaker of the Other. And because this is an internal necessity, it holds good in every particular case of error: *πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος* declares that even the members of the church fall under the condemnation of this sentence if they in any measure become confederates of the lie. Yet this most solemn declaration has also its bright converse. That lies in the second half of the verse: *ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.* Manifestly the *ὁμολογεῖν* is the antithesis of the *ἀρνεῖσθαι* in the previous verse; but, instead of the more diffuse *ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός* or *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the simple *τὸν υἱόν* is appended. For he who sees not in Jesus the Son of God, does not acknowledge another being as such, but denies generally the existence of the Son of God. No man who has ever contended against the Christology of Christian doctrine has ever accepted the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Verse 24.

Ὑμεῖς οὖν ὃ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω. Ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ ὃ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μενεῖτε.

Thus has the apostle exhibited to the church the activity of the antichrists; he has further appealed to their own knowledge of the truth, to the intent that he might win from themselves the confession that by any degree of departure from the truth they would be drawn into the antichrist fellowship. It remains now that he should draw the practical conclusion from these premisses: therefore guard yourselves against every declension from the truth; or, in its positive form, hold fast that fellowship in which ye now safely stand in despite of all the *μεθοδείαις τοῦ πονηροῦ*. The apostle begins by an asyndeton,—for the *οὖν* of the *Text. rec.* must be struck out,—and yet with specific notification of the antithesis, by means of the absolute *ὑμεῖς* that stands first. True, that in the last words there is contained no express antithesis to the *ὑμεῖς*; but the antithesis is in the sense, inasmuch as the whole of the previous discussion treated of the nature of Antichrist. Accordingly, the *ὑμεῖς* is not to be referred to the *ἠκούσατε*, for then the hearing of the readers would seem to be placed in an inscrutable contrast with the hearing of others; but it must be referred to the *μένειν* of the main sentence, so that it is in reality parallel with or equivalent to its *ἐν ὑμῖν*. That which they had heard they should hold fast: the object is given in a general manner, but its concrete meaning is preserved to it by the connection, according to which the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ is meant. The expression occurred before in ch. ii. 7; but, instead of the general *ὅ* here, the object there was the *λόγος*, the entire message of Christ: here His person is in view, there it was His work of love; but both are only diverse sides of the same matter. His whole work was the commentary on His person; His person was the text of his whole work.

But in this connection we should expect that an earnest and express exhortation would follow to keep themselves

from the antichrists, or, putting it positively, to abide in the truth. And this abiding in the truth is undoubtedly the prevailing motive in all the verses that follow; yet the form of commandment is almost altogether absent. More than that: human energy generally is kept as much as possible in the background. At the outset, indeed, the μενέτω has the imperative form; but the contents of the commandment in a very marked manner restrict human activity. That which they had heard, which had therefore come into them from without, that should abide in them: not, that should they suffer it to abide in them, in which case the Christians themselves would be the subjects of the action. This turn of the thought—which is all the more evidently intentional, as the preliminary ὑμεῖς itself suggested that the church's own activity was coming—is intended obviously to refer the μένειν to the meaning and substance of the announcement: it was not that the church must abide in the word which they had heard, but that word abide in them. The same word which had made them Christians should keep them such; the self-activity of the brethren recedes entirely into the rear; it has nothing to do but to avoid hindering the power of the truth. Essentially, therefore, it is just as when the Apostle Paul exhorts the Thessalonians, τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε; only a negative activity, a suffering themselves to be kept, was needful on their side. Similarly, in the second half of the verse the abiding in God is represented, not as a commandment, but as the inevitable and natural result of the preceding; and, finally, in ver. 27 the very necessity of any command is expressly precluded.

Now all this coincides most graciously with the set and posture of the whole section. Not only the Christian estate of the church in general, but also specifically the abiding of the word of God in it (ver. 14), forms the fundamental presupposition of it throughout; indeed, their νικᾶν τὸν πονηρόν was expressly declared to be the result of their abiding. Thus the apostle's exhortation is of a more negative kind: disturb not this energy of the truth, guard against all interruptions of it; all else will this word, im-

planted in you, itself accomplish. If this continues in them, the result will be—according to the second half of the verse—that they will continue in the Son and in the Father. This double relation, the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ* and the *μένειν* of the word of God *ἐν ἡμῖν*, occurs also in the Gospel: comp. ch. xv. 7, *ἐὰν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοὶ, καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ κ.τ.λ.* And as the word of Christ is not viewed here as a dead letter, but as the bearer and instrument of His Spirit, as pervaded and filled by Him, these expressions are parallel also with John xv. 4, 5, where to the *μένετε ἐν ἐμοί* corresponds the *κἀγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν*.

Now, that these counterpart expressions are in fact two various sides of the same thing, and that at their basis lies a real and not merely dialectical distinction, is shown at once by the causal relation in which one is here placed to the other. But it is rather hard to define the distinction sharply, because in the Gospel our abiding in God is ever exhibited as *prius*, while in this passage the order is reversed. Let us try to mark the relation of the two expressions discussed by another view, seemingly wide apart from this, which, however, only brings before us the figure of which this is the reality. Through all the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments there runs this double aspect of the matter, that we on the one hand are the temple of God in which He dwells, and that, on the other hand, we dwell in God Himself as our temple. In the latter case, God is, or His temple, which comes into consideration as the sphere of His revelation of His nature, is, the place where we find rest and peace, and security and life: thus is expressed all that we possess in God; He is here the giver, and we the receivers; He is active, and we are passive. When, inversely, we are regarded as the temple in which God dwells, we are considered ourselves as the objects in which God works and as the organs of His will; thus is expressed, by what seems a paradox, what He has in us; we in this case are the active. Precisely thus is it in the terms of our passage, which are only the pure spiritual expression of the figurative statements just examined. If we abide in God, He is the proper and essential subject, we

are parts of His I: out of His fulness we receive all, having absolutely no independent life. If He abides in us, we are ourselves the proper and real subject, He becomes a part of our I, insomuch as in our actions His will comes into effect. This will make it plain why in our text the former of these two comes first. The beginning of the relation does not lie with us, but with God; the word of Christ, and through that word His Spirit, becomes a living power in us, *μένει ἐν ἡμῖν*; and the more perfectly the entire Christ enters into us, the more perfectly and the more inwardly we are wedded to Him on our part, and enter into Him essentially: *μένομεν ἐν αὐτῷ*. Such is the actual historical process; we may, however, with propriety invert the order with John xv. 4 seq.: there, forsooth, the disciples are regarded as already standing in the fellowship of Christ; the words *καθαροί ἐστε διὰ τὸν λόγον μου*, just as in this passage, specify the indwelling of the *λόγος* in them as the first stage of their religion; but then comes in the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ* as the result, and through this result again the abiding of Christ in the disciples is nourished and strengthened. It is a permanent and continuous reciprocation: the abiding of Christ in men furthers their abiding in Him; this again facilitates the former; and so it goes on. Did they indeed but let the great message of salvation, that Jesus is the Christ, and with that message the ruling of Christ Himself in our hearts, have its full living development as a power! *ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ ὃ ἠκούσατε*: then, indeed, would they be secure against any contamination of the antichrist spirit; yea, more than that, fellowship with God would become more continuous and perfect, and that as fellowship with the Son and the Father. In the twenty-second verse the Father was first, here it is the Son. That is not an accidental or indifferent circumstance. The Father preceded before, because the apostle there had the last consummation in his eye, and would place it before the readers as the goal from which the antichrist lie would lead them astray, and to which fidelity would surely attain. Here the Son precedes, because already in Him is the means and the only means for attaining that end.

VERSE 25.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.

Now at length the apostle may regard his exhibition of the truth as completed and closed; he brings in the conclusion when he indicates that the abiding in our Lord is the final goal and issue of the whole saving institute of Christ. For we must be sure that the *αὕτη* in the beginning of ver. 25 refers to this abiding in the Lord,—that is, to what goes before, not to what follows. It is indeed not to be disputed that, generally speaking, in propositions which are constituted like this of ours, St. John is accustomed to refer the demonstrative pronoun to what follows; but a grammatical necessity it is not, and the sense here forbids it. For if the *αὕτη* is referred to the sequel, its meaning is the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*; and the thought would be, that eternal life is the promise given to us. But in that case the accusative *τὴν ζωήν* would be a still greater difficulty than it is in the explanation we shall presently give; and, moreover, the apostle would then introduce into the close of the whole period two absolutely new ideas, without the least indication of their connection with what precedes. It is quite otherwise if we refer *αὕτη* to what goes before: then the *ζωὴν αἰώνιον* is essentially in apposition with *ἐπαγγελία*, and put into the accusative only through attraction to the relative clause *ἣ ἐπηγγείλαμεν*. From this, then, we derive a meaning as clear as it is appropriate: it is this, that the abiding in the Lord forms the contents of the promise of eternal life which Christ has given us. It is certainly true, again, that the words *ἐπαγγελία* and *ἐπαγγέλλειν* are not generally current in the Johannaean idiom; and we do not find, in his Gospel, eternal life specified as the contents of the *ἐπαγγελία* of Christ,—that is, in any formal expression. It is indeed the goal to which He would conduct us, the end that He sets before us; and in this sense is a promise actually running through the whole of our Lord's life and teaching. Particularly, there are two passages, out of many which treat of eternal life, which

here come into consideration. One is in the sixth chapter, where Christ exhibits this life as the fruit of faith in Himself, vers. 40, 47, 54, while it comes further into view as the result of His words in us, comp. ver. 68, *ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις*: precisely as here, in our passage, the *ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ* forms the presupposition for that abiding in Him which is the substantial meaning of the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*. The second is ch. xvii. 2, 3, where eternal life consists in this, that *γινώσκωσί σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν καὶ* (and the addition following is the point concerned here) *ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χρίστον*. This *γιγνώσκειν* corresponds to the *ὁμολογεῖν αὐτόν* in our present passage. —Thus the Lord has set forth eternal life as the final scope of His work; to this He will lead every man; and therefore it is called the promise which He hath given. And this promise, according to our present verse, He has fulfilled; this life we have received, inasmuch as He abideth in us and we in Him: the contents and meaning of the *αὕτη*. This definition of the strict meaning of eternal life is the same—and this shows its correctness—which we found in the introduction to our Epistle, that is, in ch. i. 3, where fellowship with the Father and the Son is laid down as its substantial meaning. Moreover, it is very plain, from a consideration of our passage, how necessary it is that we should take *αἰώνιος* not as a metaphysical, but as an ethical idea: it is not its super-temporal character, but the divinity of this life which is expressed by the term.

VERSES 26, 27.

Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς. Καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἐν ὑμῖν μένει, καὶ οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκῃ ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ', ὡς τὸ αὐτὸ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστι, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

The very fact that the apostle, in ver. 25, has come round to the selfsame point from which he started, shows that the previous discussion has now attained its close. More particularly: since the discourse does not return to the starting-point of the last section (from ver. 13*c* onwards),

but to the beginning of the whole letter (compare only with the ζωὴ αἰώνιος of ver. 25 the mention of it in ch. i. 2, with the μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ the κοινωνία μετ' αὐτοῦ, ch. i. 3), it follows that the development since ch. i. 5 has now come to its end. But, like the two former sections of the whole first part now reaching its close, this third section also has a summary recapitulation, vers. 26, 27. Up to this point (ταῦτα) the apostle has written to the churches concerning the antichrists. Ταῦτα does not refer to the brevity of the discussion ("only so much"), nor to the specific matter of it ("this and no other that might be added"); but it places what goes before in contrast with what follows—with what the apostle has it in his purpose yet to write. As the section ch. xi. 3–11 treats of brotherly love, although the matter is first of all quite generally of keeping the divine commandments, so the topic of this section has been the antichrist nature, although first of all (vers. 15–17) the discourse was of the κόσμος in general, whose full form is anti-Christianity. But the antichrists came into consideration as πλανῶντες ὑμᾶς: they have aimed to make the church wander *from* the truth, and then to lead them to wander back *to* the world. This was the practical starting-point of the whole discussion. Against this practice of seduction the church had, as we have seen in the previous exposition, a defence in the χρίσμα: hence this, then, is particularly taken up again in the recapitulation. Even in the form it assumes, the *resumé* is faithful to itself: here also we have the ὑμεῖς placed significantly first; here also, moreover, there is a marked absence of any injunction as such. The holy anointing oil which they had received, which separated them from the world, is within them a permanent power,—for ἀμεταμέλητα τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλῆσις τοῦ Θεοῦ,—and makes every exhortation, even every apostolical exhortation, superfluous. And so had the Lord promised to His disciples that the Paraclete should lead them into all truth.

To establish the undeceivableness of this heavenly instruction is the object of the second clause in our verse. This second clause, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτὸ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς

περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστι, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι ψεῦδος, is related to the third just as a general proposition as a whole is to its particular concrete application. Not only does the περὶ πάντων give the former its general colouring, and the μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ give the latter its specific colouring, but the present διδάσκει also shows that in the second clause a general proposition is before us, whilst ἐδίδαξεν in the third makes prominent one definite historical single fact out of the general domain of that clause. And thus it is established that the words καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς are not merely a resumption of the ἀλλ' ὡς κ.τ.λ.,—that thus καὶ ἀληθές ἐστι κ.τ.λ. is not a parenthesis, but a conclusion to the proposition with ὡς. Certainly it is extremely difficult to accept the redoubled καί as meaning, "not only but also;" for that anything is true and not false is after all essentially no more than one attribute which is only viewed on two different sides, while "not only but also" presupposes two different ideas. But such a view as this of the former καί is not imperative; rather is the former to be translated by "also:" the congruence between the declaration of the χρίσμα and the real bearing of the matter, between the διδάσκειν and the ἀληθὲς εἶναι, was thereby to be marked. The following καὶ οὐκ ἔστι ψεῦδος is genuinely Johannaean: it is a peculiarity of this apostle to place every idea in full prominence through setting by the side of it its antithesis. This διδάσκειν of the χρίσμα is true, and there is no lie in it; and thus the ἔστι, in virtue of its deep emphasis, becomes equivalent to an ἔνεστι.

Thus, then, the apostle in the first of the three clauses of ver. 28 has summed up and resumed the whole fact that the χρίσμα gave full instruction to the church; in the second, he has declared that this instruction was simply and purely true; in the third, he then draws the practical conclusion that the church should stand firmly by the substance of the teaching here in question, and here treated of (this is the meaning of the aorist ἐδίδαξεν). The μενεῖτε of the *Text. rec.* would indeed admirably suit the tone of the whole section, in which the apostle less commands the μένειν than points to it as an internal necessity; but the imperative

μένετε has too strong authentication from external evidence to be rejected; and it is in itself easily to be understood that, at the conclusion of the whole discussion, the imperative, everywhere latent in the preceding words, should for once come out into clear expression.

Let us throw a glance back along the course of the first part, now concluded, of the whole Epistle. It is completed in three sections, of which each again contains three subsections, two giving instruction, and one exhortation or recapitulation. The first section deduces from the idea of the φῶς εἶναι of God the nature of our fellowship with Him, and as viewed under two aspects: that of ἐν φωτὶ περιπατεῖν, and that of ὁμολογεῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας. The second section discusses, on the same basis, the nature of our fellowship with the brethren, and that also under two aspects: as obedience to the ἐντολαὶ Θεοῦ, and as imitation of the converse and walk of Christ. The third section points to the enmity which exists between the kingdom of God and this world: here, again, first as against the world in general, and then as against its antichrist development in particular; but both in order to enforce the obligation of breaking off from the world negatively, or positively of abiding in God. That the two former sections of the whole discussion have their basis in Θεὸς φῶς, and are evolved from this, has been shown in the proper place. But it is true also of the third section, only that it takes up the negative side of ch. i. 3: καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία. This thorough and pervasive antithesis between them, such as forbids the very slightest contact, is the theme of the whole discussion in ch. ii. 13–27. Κόσμος and ἀντίχριστος are only terms interchangeable for the σκοτία.

Verses 28, 29.

Καὶ νῦν, τεκνία, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ· ἵνα ὅταν φανερωθῇ, ἔχωμεν παῤῥησίαν, καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ. Ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστι, γινώσκετε ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.

We have assumed, in opposition to the current view of our day, that ver. 28 belongs to the second part of the Epistle.

One circumstance may be mentioned here as making this probable: with the exception of the *μένειν* at the beginning of the verse, all the ideas in it are new ones, and enter the Epistle for the first time; but that would be a startling close of a discussion which should introduce a new series of ideas instead of summing up the old ones. But the connection of this verse with the second part becomes a certainty, when we observe that the special ideas that are literally touched here for the first time are the ever-recurring constitutive elements of the second. Thus the *φανερουσθαι* is taken up again in ch. iii. 3–8; the *παῤῥησίαν ἔχειν* is elucidated in ch. iii. 21, iv. 17, v. 14; the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* forms the fundamental idea of the first ten verses of the following chapter; the *ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγεννῆσθαι* is not only repeated in the *τέκνα Θεοῦ*, ch. iii. 1, but also from ch. iii. 24 onwards is more closely considered. But all this only introduces the all-decisive reason, which is, that the thought announced in ver. 28 is precisely in the same sense the theme of the next part as ch. i. 5 was of that we have just closed. This argument, however, must approve itself as our exposition pursues its course.

Now, if we have in ver. 28 the beginning of a new part, it follows that the emphasis does not lie on the *μένει* at the beginning, but on the clause which follows and gives the writer's design. That word serves to place the new part in connection with the other; the telic clause points to the progress of the thought. The goal of abiding in God, as the end of the development so far, is represented positively and negatively: the former by *παῤῥησίαν ἔχειν*, the latter by *μὴ αἰσχυνθῆναι*. Both these ideas derive a more specific definition from the appendages, common to them, *ἐὰν φανερωθῇ* and *ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ*. That these expressions refer to the Lord's return needs of course no proof. But it must be observed that *φανεροῦσθαι* never occurs throughout the other New Testament Scriptures as denoting the appearing of Christ for judgment: they are accustomed to express that by *ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι*, while St. John, again, never uses this latter word (not even in Rev. i. 1) for that purpose, but invariably *φανεροῦσθαι*. (The substantive *φανέρωσις*

is not to be found at all in his writings.) Further, it will help to clear up the the general subject if we bear in mind that in ch. iii. 8 the same *φανεροῦσθαι* is used concerning the manifestation of Christ in the flesh.

The peculiarity of St. John's phraseology just alluded to is not a fortuitous one, but has its deep internal reasons. Throughout the Scripture, *ἀποκάλυψις* invariably designates a revelation which has taken place in an extraordinary way, through a direct interposition of God, and therefore as a perfectly new development. In *φανεροῦσθαι* this element of the entirely new and the absolutely extraordinary is neither asserted nor denied; but the definite meaning attached to *ἀποκάλυπτειν* assigns to the *φανεροῦν* at least a predominant application to such a revealing as is the development of a definitive germ,—a development which is, in comparison with *ἀποκάλυψις*, natural and ordinary. This is the general law in the Bible. This explains how it is that in Scripture the twofold manifestation of Jesus in the flesh and for judgment is spoken of as one *ἀποκάλυψις*: His appearance in the flesh was not in fact a result of past development, but, beyond everything else, an immediate and extraordinary interposition of God, an entirely new creation; and His appearance for judgment is revealed as nothing less than an instantaneous and sudden catastrophe taking place purely through divine causality, whose product will be a *new* heaven and a *new* earth.

Now, however obvious would be here such an application of *ἀποκάλυψις*, it is not the less easy to be understood how St. John in particular comes to use, concerning both these events, not this word ever, but always *φανεροῦσθαι*. We have already often remarked that he delights to bring out into prominence the germs of the future lying in the present; it is the effect of this peculiarity that the difference between the present and the future is reduced from an absolute one to one merely relative; and when the question is of a revelation, he exhibits this rather as a *φανεροῦσθαι*, or making visible of potencies long working secretly, than as an *ἀποκάλυψις*, or something entirely new, resting immediately on divine causality. Now when St.

John, in his Gospel, ch. i. 3, teaches us to behold the operation of the λόγος already in the creation, and, since the creation, His energy as that of the φῶς ἀληθινόν, it must of course have been very natural to him to regard the manifestation of our Lord in the flesh not as something new, and as an ἀποκάλυψις, but as a φανέρωσις: this indeed we find him doing in our own Epistle, ch. i. 2, iii. 8. And similarly, to this apostle, with such a habit of looking at things, who sees the decision of judgment already involved in unbelief, who always regards the resurrection as a thing present (comp. especially John v. 25 with John xi. 25), the future judgment would appear not as altogether a new thing,—that is, as an ἀποκάλυψις,—but as a natural result and conclusion of a long series of sacred events which only now brings out into light (φανεροῦν) that which had been long present spiritually and secretly. The apostle therefore describes by ἐὰν φανερωθῇ that day in which the Lord, who abideth with His people always, will make His presence apparent at once and for ever to all eyes.

In the second member of the sentence which contains the purpose there comes in an ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ instead of the ἐὰν φανερωθῇ. This expression, which is so very current among the other writers of the New Testament, occurs in St. John nowhere but in this passage. Probably this is not an accidental circumstance; but has its reason, though the apostle might not have been altogether aware of it, in the very same habit of considering things which we have been trying to explain. It was far from his thoughts at any time to regard the appearance of the Lord as an arrival from a distance: the presence of Jesus in the midst of His disciples, and within their hearts, was ever before his thoughts. This, however, did not hinder him from using this expression for once concerning the last day.

When the Lord shall in that great day enter into the world of manifestation, our relation to Him will also be a manifest one, revealed and withdrawn from all delusion. And the μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ will then fit us and enable us in our appearance before Him παῤῥησίαν ἔχειν. It has been thought, without reason, that in this and other similar

passages, *παῤῥησίαν* has lost the fundamental idea of free and unrepressed speech. But we must remember that the subject here is the appearance of the Lord for judgment; that therefore question and answer, charge and exculpation (compare Matt. xxv. 34 seq.), enter into the accessories of the scene; and then it will not be thought absolutely necessary, at least in this passage, to resort to an enfeebled interpretation of the word. If we have continued in Him, we shall be able to answer with perfect tranquillity of mind, unqualified by fear and trembling, the questions of our righteous Judge. The negative counterpart of *παῤῥησία* is given us in the *αἰσχύνεσθαι*. Formally, the correlative is not exactly adequate; while the former presents to us the joyful tone of mind which we shall maintain in the day of judgment, the latter refers rather to the result of the judgment, as appears from the added words *ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*. The phrase, formed after the analogy of the Hebrew בּוֹשׁ מִן (compare, for example, Jer. ii. 36, Sept., *ἀπὸ Αἰγύπτου αἰσχυνθήσῃ*), does not describe the source from whence the shame springs, which would be expressed by *ὑπό*, but the object from whom we are in our shame severed. But as the *παῤῥησία* is possible only on the ground of the testimony of a good conscience, which in itself includes the result of the judgment, its happy consequence, so also the *αἰσχύνεσθαι* includes its necessary result, the separation from the Lord.

Looking at the twenty-ninth verse apart and by itself, as detached from what precedes and what follows, we are met by no difficulties of any kind. It is obvious that the subject in the *δίκαιός ἐστιν* at the commencement is God. For, as the meaning and bearing of the verse is that as "He" is righteous all must be righteous too who are His children; as throughout the New Testament we never read of a relation of sonship to Christ, only of sonship to God; as, finally, in ch. iii. 8 we are expressly called *τέκνα Θεοῦ*,—it is impossible to understand the *δίκαιος*, whose nature we as His children should carry in ourselves, of our Lord Christ. It is true that ver. 28 had spoken of Christ. But a transition, immediate and not marked by any external sign, from

discourse concerning the Son to discourse concerning the Father, is not strange in the case of St. John, in whose consciousness the two are so profoundly intertwined, that he very seldom thinks it necessary to mention either, or distinguish them otherwise than by a pronoun. And this transition need not favour the notion of a new part of the Epistle beginning with ver. 29; for in ch. iv. 21 we find in the same way that after the Father has been spoken of throughout several verses, suddenly the Son is mentioned, and obviously mentioned, by the simple pronoun *αὐτός*, and no more. Thus the plain meaning of the verse is: As the nature of God is righteousness, so must this same righteousness be the token of sonship in relation to Him; the children must bear their Father's stamp upon them.

But it is hard to determine the kind of link which the verse has with what precedes. At the first glance there is as little internal connection with the preceding thought as there is grammatical bond. Nevertheless there must be connection, even on the supposition that our verse begins the new part; for the *ἐὰν εἰδῆτε* would certainly be much too naked for the commencement of a different theme: we should expect at least a *τεκνία* or *παιδία* in a new address. And there is certainly a natural presumption in favour of the idea that the apostle was moved to set out on this fresh topic by something just before said.

There are two thoughts which appear here as new, the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* and the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Now, when we observe that in the first section of the third chapter it is said, ver. 6, *πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει*, and in ver. 9 the same thought is expressed by *πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ*; when we further mark that in ch. iii. 24 the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ* is in the same way connected with the *τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ* as the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐξ αὐτοῦ* is here connected with the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*,—we shall no longer discern in the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐξ αὐτοῦ* of our verse a new idea, but only the resumption of the *μένειν ἐν τῷ Θεῷ* often dealt with in the previous section, and mentioned in it finally at ver. 28. That the expression here used is sub-

stituted for that one has its reason, apart from what later development will show, in this, that here the divine essential righteousness (*ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστι*) comes into consideration as the source of our *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*; but that this relation of causality is made prominent as our being born of God rather than as our abiding in Him. Thus there is at once presented a point of view from which the connection of the present verse with the preceding becomes plain. This connection becomes still plainer when we more closely examine and appreciate the relation which is here established between the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* and the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Manifestly the emphasis rests upon the latter. It is not the apostle's purpose to say that whosoever is born of God must therefore of necessity work righteousness, although in itself such a proposition would be perfectly justified; but he draws the inverted conclusion, namely, that he who doeth righteousness is also born of God, because God's nature, the *δίκαιον εἶναι*, has become his nature also. Thus this new sonship is not the basis or supposition from which St. John proceeds in order to found on it the exhortation to righteousness; but the *δικαιοσύνη*, as already present, is the presupposition from which he deduces the reality of their sonship. The question is here to lay down a mark of the regeneration of the soul. Now, if we bear in mind that the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* is simply a resumption in another form of the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ*, being related to this as the planting of the tree is to its flower, we shall perceive that here we have also a mark given us of the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ*.

And why is this given? In the preceding passage the *παῤῥησία* in the day of judgment was made dependent on the *μένειν ἐν τῷ Θεῷ*; here it is said further how it is this *παῤῥησία* comes into effect,—that is, it operates thus, that he who continueth in God, and therefore is born of God, becomes firmly assured of this his fellowship with God through his *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*. The synthesis of the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ* and the *παῤῥησία* — that is, their close relation, which the former verse merely asserted—is here

expressly indicated through the mediating link between them, which is the newly introduced idea of *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*. The idea of the *παῤῥησία* presupposes not only the abiding in God, but the conscious assurance of it: this, however, is produced by the *doing* of righteousness. Strictly speaking, indeed, our abiding in God and the abiding of God in us are in their unity something entirely internal, perceptible only to the feeling or the consciousness; therefore it is, like every feeling, something subjective which is itself and as such no pledge of its own objective reality. This additional guarantee or assurance it receives through such a confirmation in act: we are to know others by their fruits, and by our own fruits we are to know ourselves. He who finds this *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* in his life has in sustaining this sure test for his knowledge of himself (*γινώσκετε* is in the indicative), the guarantee of his being born from above, and therewith also the *παῤῥησία*, which the apostle bound up with fellowship with God.

Thus a close consideration of ver. 29 shows, what appeared plain enough on ver. 28 itself, that the new part begins with ver. 28, the idea of which is supplemented and made specific by what follows. Further, there is thus afforded to us a clear view of the relation of the part of the epistle now closed to that which now begins. In both the apostle keeps in view the end he proposed in the introduction, that of helping towards advancing fellowship with God and fellowship with the brethren; but the method differs in the two. In the first part this fellowship comes into consideration as an internal habit; in the second it is rather its confirmation in works. From the very beginning we have accustomed ourselves to understand the *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί* in the first chapter of more than the mere external actions of man in the narrower sense; of the sphere, rather, in which his whole life and being are rooted. The *ἁμαρτίαι* and the *ἀδικία* are by no means limited to actual sins of commission; they include all sins whether in thought or in word or in work. Similarly, in the second chapter the *τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς* is not to be restricted to the *ποιεῖν* in the external sense, but, as the ideas *ἀγαπᾶν* and *μισεῖν*

immediately following show, pre-eminently to the inner mind. And then in the third section of the first part the nature of it is traced to the ἐπιθυμία and ἀλαζονεία: therefore it is not so much in the outward expressions of a quality as in the quality itself.

That in ch. i. 6 we read once of ποιεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, and similarly in ch. ii. 17 once of ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, are exceptions which have no power to alter the definitely marked character of the section in each case; in fact, it is not the inner mind as opposed to the external confirmation which is the subject, but the *habitus* of the Christians generally, which includes the approval of its reality in works. Out of this *habitus* generally is now in the second part the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην taken and brought forward prominently and laid down as the token of that *habitus:* on its reality, as we have seen, the παῤῥησία of Christians, as its final consummation, depended. In details, we may observe at the outset and in advance, the course of the whole of the second part is very similar to that of the first. First, the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην is viewed in reference to God, then in reference to the brethren; finally, from their combination the παῤῥησία is deduced, and thus once more we have supernumerary confirmation in the tenor of this part, that its theme is to be found in ver. 28; for the παῤῥησία spoken of there is dilated on after the full illustration of the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, which is introduced in ver. 29; in harmony, therefore, with our analysis, according to which the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην is the middle term between what the μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ treated of in the preceding and the παῤῥησία.

Finally, in this way we are extricated, as easily as satisfactorily, from a difficulty which we designedly left behind in ver. 27. There the χρίσμα is introduced as an absolutely right guide, never erring and always to be depended upon, which the church therefore might follow most implicitly. We have seen in the proper place that the anointing oil, by which the church is withdrawn from the world, is the Holy Ghost; and it is of course self-understood that the Spirit cannot deceive. But here comes

in the question as to how this χρίσμα may be known as such, as to what its tests are,—that is to say, if instruction through the apostolical word is represented as superfluous, then the door seems to be opened for all fanaticism, which is always so ready to appeal to the internal voice of the Spirit, either esteeming the apostolical word less or altogether despising it. The answer to the question here proposed is given in the new part of the Epistle: only there is the χρίσμα, the new birth, present with its abiding in God, where the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην is found. Doing is the evidence of all evidences; and such a doing as harmonizes or corresponds with the divine δίκαιον εἶναι.

Now it is precisely this relation between the governing ideas which we now have to do with that brings out the exquisitely careful steps by which the Epistle goes onward. The first part leads up to its climax by developing its ideas to the point at which, by an internal necessity, they must issue, unless they are to remain both one-sided and untrue. That the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην is the conclusive evidence of any man's personal Christianity, the only undeceiving mark by which the Christian may test himself, is in perfect agreement with the Pauline view; in 2 Tim. ii. 19 it is said concerning the sure foundation of God, that is, according to the context, the Christian community: ἔχει τὴν σφραγῖδα ταύτην, ἔγνω κύριος τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ· καὶ, ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ τῆς ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In this passage also there is, by the side of the divine knowledge which is not within man's apprehension, the turning away from ἀδικία, that is, positively, the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην; and this latter is the only possible ground of our own personal knowledge concerning our belonging to the οἰκία Θεοῦ. Not unlike this is the passage, Rom. x. 10. There it is said that while it is faith that justifies, confession saves (σωθῆναι). Internally, the right relation to God is attained through believing; but in order to the full enjoyment of the righteousness of faith, and the realization of its purpose, there must be the outward righteousness of the life: St. Paul, however, here speaks of its expression in word, while St. John makes the work prominent. The

divine sonship spoken of here is imparted before any doing of man can claim or approve it; but man's good work demonstrates its reality, and only thus is the full assurance of sonship attained.

After having found our position by means of a careful examination of vers. 28 and 29, let us take a parting glance at the details. St. John begins with *καὶ νῦν μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ*, joining on to the preceding context. The *καὶ νῦν* is always appropriated to this use, — namely, that of introducing something new on the basis of a previous discussion; such is its service in the only passage of St. John's Gospel where it occurs, ch. xvii. 5. The new thought that enters is the *παῤῥησία* in the judgment, which thought is mediated and introduced by the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*. The principle of this mediation between them is that God Himself is righteous, and righteousness is therefore an essential attribute of one who is born *ἐξ αὐτοῦ*,—that is, of God's own very nature. From the connection it follows that the righteousness of God does not here refer to His judicial righteousness: as if it were, Ye know that the judgment will be a righteous one, therefore so act that ye may stand in such a day as that. The *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* does not correspond to the judicial righteousness of God, but to His righteous character and holiness. *Δίκαιος* here has the same meaning as in ch. ii. 2 and John xvii. 25 (comp. on ch. i. 9). This principle, that God is essentially righteous, is to the Christian undoubted and fundamental, *οἴδατε*; and that we on our side have in the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* the assurance that we are born of Him, is the logical deduction that naturally follows, *γινώσκετε*. A thing, however, which is to be represented as necessary is not expressed by the imperative, but by the indicative; consequently we must understand *γινώσκετε* as indicative here.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 1.

Ἴδετε, ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατὴρ, ἵνα τέκνα Θεοῦ κληθῶμεν· διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν.

The external bond of connection between this verse and what precedes is clear; the Christian sonship, which in ver. 29 was mentioned in the last place, is resumed by means of the *τέκνα Θεοῦ κληθῆναι*, in order to make prominent the greatness of the divine gift which is imparted in it. Yet this evident connection decides nothing as to the chain of thought in the following verses; that will have to be detected on a careful consideration of the details. *Ἴδετε*, St. John says, *ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατήρ*. Into the thought of the glory of this sacred relation our minds should profoundly sink: the emphasis of that high dignity is not alone in *ἴδετε*, which announces something most specific, but also in the pronoun *ποταπός*. This never occurs in the New Testament save as introducing an exclamation of amazement. It never serves, however, to indicate merely external greatness (as equivalent to *quantus*), but always that which is internal (*qualis*). The meaning is not that it is a special kind of love which we have to wonder at in the divine relation of father, as if in proportion to other kinds of love; but the reference is generally to the wonderfulness of its interior characteristic: the full depth, interiority, and grace of it is marked impressively by this word. *Ἀγάπην διδόναι* says more than a mere demonstration of love; the full power of divine love has imparted itself to us as our own, is a free gift to us; not only specific manifestations of the love of God, but that love itself is given to us.

And this was the Father's act, ὁ πατήρ. It might seem obvious, since the subject here is our relation towards God as children, to refer this πατήρ to the relation between God and us, and thus to read it as if it were πατὴρ ἡμῶν. But a closer consideration teaches that throughout the entire Gospel of St. John the expression πατήρ, when it is used absolutely of God, always indicates the Father of Jesus Christ. The only two passages in which it might be thought to have a different meaning are John iv. 21, 23; as the woman of Samaria did not know the specific relation of Jesus to God, the expression must have been unintelligible to her in that sense. But they need not be made exceptions, especially as the woman certainly understood that the Lord was speaking concerning God, and there was no need that she should apprehend precisely in what sense He used the word. In our Epistle the expression ὁ πατήρ is either obviously to be understood at once of God as the Father of Jesus Christ, as, for example, in ch. ii. 22 seq.; or it occurs without manifest reference to Christ, as in ch. ii. 14–16. But even in these last cases it is not obligatory to supply ἡμῶν; rather, in harmony with the frequent use of the word in the lips of Jesus, it seems preferable to find in them the standing designation of the first person in the Godhead, so that ὁ πατήρ should correspond to our "God the Father." If this be so, we are then disposed here also to regard the expression as indicating the way in which God has demonstrated this love to us,—that is, as the Father of Jesus Christ, and through the mission of His Son.

That the final clause with ἵνα is by most expositors softened down, and the philological purism of those rebuked who are not content that it should be so, is easily understood, because in fact, according to the connection, the κληθῆναι τέκνα Θεοῦ seems to be the *content* of the ἀγάπη. We should, indeed, have a perfectly satisfying interpretation if we take the ἵνα in its rigorous meaning as stating the design. What a depth and inwardness of love is that which the Father hath given us in order that we might be called His children! The thought would be: "How much

it cost Him that I am redeemed!" But since this idea of the mission and death of His Son comes in without any direct mediating link, we must prefer to take the κληθῆναι τέκνα Θεοῦ as certainly the *content* of the ἀγάπη; but that which is its content and meaning is *at the same time* its end. The love of God is manifested in this, that He makes us His children; but that very same thing is the goal He aimed at, the object He pursued. Now it is precisely the latter point that is brought into prominence, and there is no reason whatever why we should take the ἵνα as ecbatic. It is God's will to make us His τέκνα: that it does not run simply τέκνα αὐτοῦ, but Θεοῦ is placed instead, was intended to point to the height and greatness, past all understanding, of this gift, to be children of the eternal and all-glorious God.

It is well known that St. John has only the expression τέκνα Θεοῦ, while St. Paul has by the side of it the υἱοὶ Θεοῦ. The internal reason of this distinction in the expression will appear when we come to examine the second verse. But the material difference between the two manners of viewing the relation to God we may here at once illustrate. The idea of the γεννηθῆναι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, which, according to the connection, constitutes the τέκνα Θεοῦ, is not current in St. Paul's writings; and when he uses any expressions like them, they have a different signification from that of St. John. We know, indeed, that the former speaks of an ἀνακαίνωσις τοῦ νόος (Rom. xii. 2); of a νέος ἄνθρωπος ἀνακαινούμενος εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν (Col. iii. 10); of an ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ Θεὸν κτισθέντα (Eph. iv. 28); of a καινὴ κτίσις (Gal. vi. 15). But in all these places the renewal is a formation back into the original human nature as created of God. This is expressly brought into prominence in the passage to the Colossians by the definition τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν. It is a reforming back again which indeed comes to effect *through* the grace of God; and it has its measure or standard (κατὰ Θεὸν κτισθέντα) in the nature of God, because it was simply in the image of God that man was originally created; but it is not on that account said to take

place, as it were, *out of* or from God's nature. This, however, is the side which St. John brings out in the idea of the *παλιγγενεσία*, of the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, and keeps always before him. Even in the passage where St. Paul uses the word *παλιγγενεσία*, Tit. iii. 5, we shall, after the analogy of his general habit of thought and statement, be constrained to find only the element of the renewal through the help of the Divine Spirit, through a renewal or reimpartation of the original gift of the Spirit (*ἀνακαίνωσις Πνεύματος Ἁγίου*), while St. John never fixes his eye on the mere outpouring and help of grace, but always on the communication of God's own divine nature.

This difference is in close connection with another which has often been dwelt upon,—namely, that St. Paul regards us as children of God *adoptive*, and therefore uses the word *υἱοθεσία*, while St. John regards us as children in nature and reality. The former stands hard by or is closely related to the Pauline emphasis on the Christ FOR us, his juridical doctrine of satisfaction (this word we use, be it remembered, without the slightest undertone of condemnation); the latter is more in harmony with the Johannaean emphasis upon the Christ IN us. According to St. Paul, we receive for Christ's *sake* the *rights* of children; according to St. John, we receive, *through* Christ, the children's *nature*. According to St. Paul, the old nature of man is transformed into a new; according to St. John, an altogether new principle of nature takes the place of the former. It is most evident that the two views are substantially one and true; but they depend on the respective general systems of the two apostles. And this explains, too, how the full meaning of *δέδωκεν* is in the leading clause: the love of God is a gift; it is particularly the gift of His Spirit; still more particularly it is the gift of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

There is a remarkable difference of reading in the telic clause. According to the authority of the manuscripts, there should be after the *κληθῶμεν* a very decisive *καὶ ἐσμέν* added. Respect for the important witnesses in its favour will not permit us to strike it out absolutely; yet it seems to us in a high degree suspicious; not, indeed, on

account of the continuity in the form of the sentence which it mars,—for of this there are examples enough to be adduced,—but on account of the sense of the whole. The greatness of the divine gift does not consist in this, that we are acknowledged as God's children, but primarily and pre-eminently in this, that we are such in reality; which also the recapitulation of the thought in ver. 2 by *τέκνα Θεοῦ ἐσμέν* makes emphatic. The *κληθῶμεν* of our passage would be suitable on this supposition only, as it includes the *εἶναι* or *ἐσμέν*. But if, after the *κληθῶμεν*, this latter idea was supernumerarily added, then the former word must mean only the acknowledgment of sonship, and not the being sons. The emerging thought would then be harsh and distorted. We might, indeed, accept *ὦμεν καὶ κληθῶμεν*, but not the inverted order. It is preferable, therefore, to regard the *καὶ ἐσμέν* as a gloss which came very early into the text; this would explain the many testimonies in its favour as well as its indicative form. The subject of the verb, who calls us children, is not to be regarded as God—for what would there be remarkable in His calling us what we are?—but believers themselves; and in favour of this way of taking it comes in the antithesis in the sequel, *ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς*. According to our general exposition of the Epistle, the apostle is occupied from the very beginning with the idea of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light; the individual comes into consideration not as an individual, but as a member of the whole body, as a stone in the temple of God. This recognition which the single member receives from the church is what lies in the *καλεῖσθαι*. And there is a double propriety of the word in this section, which treats of the confirmation or proof of sonship in deed. In the spiritual generation lies the point or characteristic to approve ourselves children of God,—that is, the necessity of proving ourselves such; and the precise counterpart of this is our recognition by others as children.

But, indeed, only on the part of the church. For, precisely in the proportion that we approve ourselves to them as children of God, shall we be unintelligible by the

world. The διὰ τοῦτο of the last clause in ver. 1 does not refer to the following ἵνα any more than it does to the καλεῖσθαι that precedes, but to the τέκνα Θεοῦ εἶναι, or, still better, to the whole of the previous clause. Because we have become partakers of this divine love, which communicates to us its own essence, the world cannot know us, because it knows not Him whom we have come to resemble so much. Substantially, therefore, this proposition is quite naturally proved by that out of which it flows; nevertheless there is a touch of strangeness about it, inasmuch as there is scarcely any allusion throughout the entire section, vers. 1–10, to our relation to the world. And in fact the significance of this added clause is gathered less from the particular thought precisely touched upon here, than from the whole tenor of the Johannaean habit of thinking generally. It is St. John's manner, as we have seen it illustrated abundantly throughout the two former chapters, always to think in antitheses: to construct the matter of a positive idea out of its combination or contrast with its opposite. Precisely so is it here. The greatness of God's love, which admits us into fellowship with God Himself, is to be brought out all the more vividly through this antithesis, that our perfect and absolute separation from the world, even down to a total want of common understanding, is made so prominent. Thus the second hemistich is introduced, not for the sake of the discussion that follows, but purely to illustrate the thought itself and as such now in hand.

Verse 2.

Ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα Θεοῦ ἐσμεν· καὶ οὔπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα. οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα· ὅτι ὀψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθώς ἐστι.

The fellowship with God, which is based upon the γεννηθῆναι ἐξ αὐτοῦ or the τέκνον Θεοῦ εἶναι, is the prominent idea of the section before us: the tokens of this divine sonship, which are no other than the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, are not to be more carefully exhibited. Great as the love of God is which approves itself in the gift of our

sonship (ver. 1), in that gift it has not reached its highest goal: it will make us partakers of something higher still. What that higher prerogative is the second verse shows. The apostle begins by an emphasized repetition of the present gift, *νῦν τέκνα Θεοῦ ἐσμεν.* The verse before had spoken of the *κληθῆναι τέκνα Θεοῦ*, this verse speaks of the *εἶναι*; for in ver. 1 the apostle's aim was not only to bring out our filial relationship to God, but at the same time the position which in virtue of it we attain as to other children of God in His kingdom; but here this aspect of the matter recedes, and our absolute relationship to God and to Him alone comes again to the front.

It is usual to expound the thought of the verse thus: we *are* already indeed internally the children of God, though not yet such in the fullest sense of the word; hereafter this internal *habitus* will also be externally manifested (*ἐὰν φανερωθῇ*), and then will this sonship be revealed, through the contemplation of God, through the *ὅμοιον αὐτῷ εἶναι*, in all its glory and fulness. The distinction between the now and the then would accordingly in that case be only quantitative and not qualitative; not a difference in the thing, but in the degree of it; only the difference between the germinal beginning and the developed consummation. But this analysis seems to us by no means in harmony with the phraseology of the verse. For when we read *νῦν τέκνα ἐσμὲν καὶ οὔπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα*, there is a difference certainly and obviously established as to the predicative definition of the sonship: the declaration of what we shall be one day is placed in contrast with what we now are, that is, with the *τέκνα Θεοῦ εἶναι.* If we seize the exact sense of the words, it can be only this, that we shall be hereafter something different as children of God from what we now are. If it had been the apostle's design to express the thought given above as the alternative, to wit, that the sonship now begun would hereafter be consummated, we should expect *οὔπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσμεν* instead of *οὔπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα*,— that is, what we essentially are now already is simply not yet come to its full expansion and development (*οὔπω*

ἐφανερώθη). Moreover, we should in this case look for τέκνα Θεοῦ in the beginning of the sentence, emphasized thus as the idea common to the present and the future, τέκνα Θεοῦ ἤδη νῦν ἐσμεν κ.τ.λ. But, as the words now run, the τέκνα is in antithesis with what follows: now the children of God, hereafter something different.

Of course, this antithesis is not an absolute one. By the φανερουῦσθαι the future development is also exhibited as a consummation of the present estate; only that this development leads to something beyond the τέκνα Θεοῦ. Thus, then, an unbiassed consideration of the whole verse arrives at this idea: we have now the mighty gift of sonship to God, but hereafter it will be shown what we shall be; in any case, something more than this. The crisis at which this new development will enter is indeed, strictly speaking, not declared; for we do not read ὅταν, but ἐὰν φανερωθῇ; but, inasmuch as this φανερωθῇ does substantially look back to the φανερωθῆναι of ch. ii. 29, it is manifest that the apostle is thinking of the development commencing with the judgment, that is, of eternity. But this does not by any means decide that the φανερωθῇ has the same subject as in ch. ii. 28, Christ namely; rather it is more obvious to take τί ἐσόμεθα as the subject: when it will come to the light of day to what consummate and final development we are called.

But, though the matter and meaning of our full development does not actually lie before our thought in revelation, yet it is already well known to us (οἴδαμεν). What it is we find announced in the two sentences, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα and ὀψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθώς ἐστιν. The stricter apprehension of what this means depends primarily on the view we take of the ὅτι which introduces the second clause. It either gives the reason of the first, exhibiting the likeness as the result of the seeing, or it gives the reason of the οἴδαμεν. But since in the latter case it must, taken exactly, have meant that *we know* that we shall see Him; and further, since the ὄψεσθαι αὐτόν as a reason for our ὅμοιον εἶναι αὐτῷ is, as we shall see, a decidedly biblical idea, we shall adhere to the first view, and accordingly

proceed from the second clause as the presupposition on which the first depends.

Now, however, rises the question who is to be understood by the pronoun *αὐτόν*, whether God or Christ. It cannot be denied that, taking the preceding sentence into account, the more obvious subject is *ὁ Θεός*; it is further in favour of referring the pronoun to the Father, that in ver. 3 the Son is defined by *ἐκεῖνος*; for, if the Son is throughout spoken of, why this change of the pronoun, why the *ἐκεῖνος*, which obviously seems to refer to a more distant subject? But, as it respects the first reason, we have just now seen that in ver. 29 the Father is without any further intimation spoken of after the Son had been decidedly the subject in ver. 28; while it was there obvious enough that the reader should understand the Son to be the subject because St. John points him to the *ἡμέρα κρίσεως*, on which, according to scriptural teaching generally, as in particular that of ch. ii. 28, the Son is the active person. As to the second reason, the entering of *ἐκεῖνος* into the third verse, we may appeal to ver. 7, where *ἐκεῖνος* stands although in what precedes the Lord had been more than once spoken of as *αὐτός*. But yet more stringent is the appeal to John v. 39: *ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχειν· καὶ ἐκεῖναί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ.* Here the change of the pronouns in the same verse obviously did not arise out of a change in the subject, but *ἐκεῖνος* is substituted only for stronger emphasis on the same subject: "these very same are they which testify of Me." Precisely so is it here: "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as the same He is pure." But all this only proves the possibility that the pronouns of the second and third verses collectively may be referred to Christ; it is shown to be necessary, however, by the expression itself, *ὀψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθώς ἐστι.* It is everywhere the scriptural doctrine that the Father can in no sense whatever be seen. That does not follow so much from the Johannaean utterance, *Θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται,*—for, although He is not seen here below, He might, nevertheless, in some sense be seen

in eternity,—but it is absolutely required by the Pauline saying, Ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται . . . φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον. It is true that in some passages of the New Testament — not to speak of figurative expressions in the Old — a seeing or beholding of God is spoken of. But Matt. v. 8 can hardly be reckoned among these; on the one hand, because the seven benedictions revolve so directly in Old Testament terms that we must needs understand them after the meaning rather of the Old Testament than of the New, as, for instance, in the verse immediately following the one referred to the idea of the υἱοὶ Θεοῦ is altogether a different one from that which is exhibited, as we have seen, in our Epistle; on the other hand, because, as promise and requirement must stand in a close relation, the preceding καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ seems clearly to indicate the sphere in which the seeing is to be enjoyed, that is, in the heart.

The meaning of the words is thus no other than that of Ps. xvii. 15: אֲנִי בְצֶדֶק אֶחֱזֶה פָנֶיךָ אֶשְׂבְּעָה בְהָקִיץ תְּמוּנָתֶךָ. The form of God which David would contemplate is His manifestation of Himself; and thus the first hemistich also, as similarly Matt. viii. 15, understands by the seeing of God the immediate fellowship of the heart with Him. As it respects Rev. xxii. 4, the visions of this book also are extremely analogous with the Old Testament style of representation, and it is hazardous to derive any dogmas immediately from its figures; while, in addition to this, we have there the πρόσωπον τοῦ Θεοῦ, and this of itself points us to the sphere of transcendent divine manifestations.

The doctrine of Scripture on this point comes most clearly out of John xiv. 7. There it is expressly said that the disciples have seen the Father because they see the Son: this is the only way in which a vision of God is practicable. From the beginning of days down to the most distant aeons the Logos is the only revealer of the Father; and no one enters into any union with the Father save through His mediation. That general signification, according to which the ὄπτεσθαι may certainly be predicated also of God, cannot be applied in our present

passage: here there is no allusion to any spiritual beholding. For this takes place even on earth, and could not therefore be appropriately assigned to futurity. Moreover, in that case, the consequence deduced would not hold good; for, although in that spiritual sense we may indeed already see God, we are by no means on that account ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ. The reference to God is also excluded by the καθώς ἐστι: this addition can mean to indicate nothing less than an absolutely adequate knowledge of God; but how is it possible that man, the creature, should ever reach by contemplation the interior and perfect fulness of the Creator? But, if we are reduced on such a supposition to accept the beholding of God in a limited sense, the consequence deduced from it, the ὅμοιον εἶναι αὐτῷ, must in like manner be limited; and the full and weighty expressions of the apostle must become altogether indefinite and nebulous. Only in one way can we know God, that is, through knowing Christ; and Him we may know because He has become like us. The same inference we draw from the expression ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα. Is it the style of Scripture to say that we shall be like unto God? Concerning Christ it affirms not only the ὅμοιον εἶναι, but also the εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ (Phil. ii. 6); but is this said also of us? One we are to become like, the Lord Jesus; therefore it is said in Phil. iii. 21 that our earthly body is to be glorified into the likeness (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι σύμμορφον) of His glorified body, and that we should grow up εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας καὶ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. But nothing of this kind could be said of God, nor is anything of this kind ever said. Finally, then, as after all our discussion there is a phraseological possibility of referring the pronoun to Christ, while all scriptural analogy most decidedly favours our doing so, we must follow this guidance; and we shall find that fuller investigation of the details will furnish further justification of our doing so.

Now when St. John declares that Christians "know" that they shall see the Lord, the question immediately rises as to the ground of that knowledge. First of all, we must go back to the sayings of our Lord Himself; and we

find in the high-priestly prayer, John xvii. 24, a thought altogether similar: *πάτερ, οὓς δέδωκάς μοι, θέλω ἵνα ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ, κἀκεῖνοι ὦσι μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἵνα θεωρῶσι τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμὴν ἣν ἔδωκάς μοι.* From these words was derived and formed the Christian hope of seeing the Lord as He is in His glory. It is precisely this which the expression says, *ὀψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθώς ἐστιν.* A beholding of the glorified Redeemer as He is (*καθὼς ἔστιν*), is, in fact, on earth impossible; it is altogether outside of the ability of the human spirit to form a conception of the Son of man as He is now, since He has been received again into the fellowship of Deity, the man Jesus with the attributes of the Godhead; yea, even His glorified body we cannot conceive of. For all this we have no faculty nor ability to contemplate now. *Καθὼς ἦν,* as He once walked on the face of this earth the Son of man, the apostles had seen Him; thus have we also seen Him, at least in spiritual contemplation, since the apostles have set Him before our eyes as if He were visibly amongst us crucified; *καθὼς ἔστιν,* in the glory which He had before the foundation of the world, and which He has again now restored, no one has ever yet seen Him, nor can any one see Him. If, then, the *καθώς ἐστιν* of our passage corresponds to the phrase *τὴν δόξαν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι* (John xvii. 22); if, further, the *δόξα Θεοῦ* of ch. i. 6 has been understood of His *ἐν φωτὶ εἶναι,*—then must the seeing of the Lord as He is be no other than the seeing Him as He is *φῶς.* Assuredly, the expression *Θεὸς φῶς,* ch. i. 5, applied primarily to the Father; not only, however, is it a firmly settled point that what the Father hath the Son hath likewise, but also it is expressly said that the Logos is *τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων,* and in ch. ii. 9 the expressions *ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι, τὸ φῶς ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει,* are referred to the Son. The idea of light is so entirely the fundamental idea of the Epistle before us, that in this passage we may translate *ὄπτεσθαι αὐτὸν καθώς ἐστιν* by beholding the light of the Redeemer's glory. God dwells in an inaccessible light; but though we cannot find direct access, indirect access we can find to His presence. Our verse lays down the means of

this: we may hereafter see the Lord in His glory, as the ἀπαύγασμα τοῦ φωτός. And thus the apostle's assertion, that through this beholding of the Lord (ὅτι) we may be made like Him, comes to its clear meaning. Here again we may refer to Matt. vi. 22: the eye is not only the organ by means of which we see the light as an external thing; it is, at the same time, the medium through which our whole body becomes light,—that is, the medium through which the light outside of us is translated into our own eye. Thus, he who seeth the Lord in His glory as light, becomes thereby a light himself; what is beheld becomes his own immediate possession; he becomes like his Lord. The ὅμοιος must not be pressed too far, nor must it be softened away: of the former we are in danger when we think of anything like absolute equality, which the word says nothing about; of the latter we are in danger when we think only of holiness in general. This holiness, the turning away from all sin, should, according to the tenor of what follows, be found even upon earth; that is a prerogative which we already have as τέκνα Θεοῦ; but when it shall be manifested τί ἐσόμεθα, there will be something beyond that privilege, even the glorification of our whole being after the analogy of the being of our glorified Lord. It is an altogether wrong and inadequate idea that limits the blessedness of heaven to sinlessness. Through sin our whole nature has become different; and therefore the heavenly life, the ὅμοιον εἶναι αὐτῷ, will be something beyond the mere ceasing from sin. Sinless our Lord was upon earth; yet, notwithstanding that, His present existence is altogether different from that which He had upon earth.

And now we have arrived at the point from which we may clearly discern what is the distinction between the τέκνα Θεοῦ and the τί, of which it is said that such we shall be. That the consummation of believers here dealt with is to be something different from the sonship, has been hitherto maintained and proved by appeal to the expressions here used. But now we shall vindicate the correctness of this assertion by substantial reasons taken from the

nature of the case. Here on earth the Saviour was a Son of God in the fullest and highest sense. Indeed, He was also very much more: even here already He was the Son of God, equal to God in power. But was He equal also in honour? The dignity, the divine form, He had laid aside, and with respect to this He was while upon earth, in virtue of His own spontaneous decision, not ὅμοιος τῷ Θεῷ. To that He was restored in its fullest and deepest sense only by the ascension. So shall it be with us. We also are now τέκνα Θεοῦ; but that does not constitute us like the Lord, any more than He Himself was in an absolute measure like God while in His humiliation, where the μορφὴ Θεοῦ was lacking to Him. But this we shall be, the apostle's promise tells us.

And what means the expression which the New Testament Scripture elsewhere uses to describe this consummated likeness? Ἀδελφοὶ Χριστοῦ. Our Lord gives His disciples this name once after the resurrection (John xx. 17); for through what it signifies the likeness is rendered possible; that is the very foundation of it, as the Epistle to the Hebrews clearly shows (ch. ii. 11). But, on the other hand, the feeling of every one of our hearts tells us that, while we even now may assume to be the children of God, we cannot arrogate the dignity of brotherhood with Christ. He is not ashamed to call us brethren (Heb. ii. 17); but we must not be bold enough to adopt the name. The brotherhood, which consists in perfect likeness to the Lord, we shall reach only at the end of the days when we shall see Him as He is.

Now comes out clearly the reason of that peculiarity in St. John's phraseology to which we have referred,—to wit, that he uses the phrase τέκνα Θεοῦ, but never adopts St. Paul's word υἱοὶ Θεοῦ. The former is a relative and transitory designation; the latter is one that never ceases. One remains a υἱός all through his life; He even who is exalted to the right hand of God is a υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ; but it would be impossible to call Him any longer a τέκνον, for in this idea there is always the element of subordination or of a development not yet fulfilled. On earth human

parents may, indeed, still term an adult child τέκνον; but that is only because, in relation to their offspring, they are conscious of being in authority, or of standing in a higher position. If St. Paul uses, in addition to the expressions τέκνα Θεοῦ, that of υἱοὶ Θεοῦ, it is simply because he condenses all that we have or ever shall have into this latter term, without reflecting specifically on the beginning of the development as the definition τέκνα would suggest it. On the other hand, St. John uses only this latter expression, because he never leaves out of sight this element of the commencing development. St. Paul uses child and son promiscuously; St. John does not, for to him child always denotes the idea of immaturity or of being under age. For the present, therefore, he knows only *the one* υἱὸς Θεοῦ, Him who is our common Master; all the rest of us are τέκνα Θεοῦ. But thus it shall not be always. He thinks of a stage when we shall be in full possession of equality with Christ; and he expresses his idea of this by the ὅμοιον εἶναι αὐτῷ, that is, Χριστῷ. The filial relation, viewed as τέκνα εἶναι, is therefore not yet identical with the ὅμοιον εἶναι Χριστῷ; it is rather the germ and the principle out of which the latter grows into full formation, like the moth from the pupa-chrysalis. And it is this which makes the term φανεροῦσθαι so admirably expressive: nothing new will then be imparted; it will be only the full evolution or expansion into the light of the germs already deposited. That our view of the filial relation in St. John's words is the right one, receives, as we think, strong support from the circumstance that the Apocalypse, which points throughout to this φανέρωσις, altogether omits the word we now consider.

VERSE 3.

Καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἁγνίζει ἑαυτὸν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἁγνός ἐστι.

The apostle's aim in inserting here the reference to the future consummation in the other world, becomes obvious in the third verse. His eschatology is one that is altogether practical. To this estate of glory we attain only

through intermediate stages; it is not reached through an act of divine despotic power; but a way is definitely marked out. If the goal is likeness to Christ, it is of the utmost importance to have that goal always and steadily and practically in view. Thus the third verse impresses its seal on our interpretation of the previous one. That is to say, taking as we have done both pronouns (*αὐτός*, ver. 2, and *ἐκεῖνος*, ver. 3) as indicating Christ, the idea is extremely plain: Would you be hereafter perfectly like Christ, you must even now aim at this same end. On the other hand, if we refer the *αὐτός* of the second verse to the Father, the point of connection with the third is lost: how from the hope of becoming like God may spring the zeal to preserve the *ἁγνεία* of Christ is not said; and yet it is that we should expect. But we must even now aim to resemble the *ἁγνεία* of our Lord. We must be on our guard against taking this idea as interchangeable with that of the *ὅμοιον εἶναι αὐτῷ* in the previous verse. *Ἁγνεία* is essentially the requirement of sinlessness; this is exhibited as the goal and problem of the earthly development of the Christian. But if I think of this requirement as fulfilled, yet this is far from including the full meaning of the *ὅμοιον εἶναι αὐτῷ*, as it was still more closely defined by the addition *καθώς ἐστι*. Christ was, indeed, sinless here upon earth; but that did not constitute Him the glorified one whom we are to become like. The weakness of which the Apostle Paul speaks, in relation to Christ's earthly life (2 Cor. xiii. 4), the constraints and manifold limitation to which He had subjected Himself, would remain in us also, even if we were supposed to be sinless. It is therefore with perfect propriety that St. John regards this *ἁγνεία* as only a preliminary and condition of the *ὅμοιον εἶναι* hereafter to be attained.

But the requirement of *ἁγνεία* requires to be defined more closely. Despite its etymological affinity with *ἅγιος*, the word *ἁγνός*, in profane as well as in scriptural use, has a perfectly distinct and definite meaning apart from *ἅγιος*. On the one hand, it is to be observed that *ἁγνός* contains even in classical Greek a negative element, which takes

form in an abundance of connections, such as ἁγνὸς φόνου, ἁγνὸς γάμου. Further, the etymological link with ἄζεσθαι, fear, and ἄγαμαι, wonder at, is more firmly adhered to in ἁγνός than in ἅγιος. Ἁγνός is he who is by any authority, or by any power swaying him, preserved from evil. The ἁγνὸν εἶναι comes to effect through the αἰδώς, the sacred fear. Hence the word is never used of God Himself; though ἅγιος is used of Him, signifying as it does generally severance from all evil. Hence, further, ἁγνός is especially used of the chaste spirit; it rests essentially on the internal abhorrence of anything that would tarnish virgin purity and honour. Similarly, when ἁγνός is said of the Nazarite: his *abstinentia* is grounded on the dread of tainting by contact with the profane the divine to which he is consecrated. In like manner, the word is in Exodus applied to preparation for the divine revelation of the law: here, also, there is a dread of bringing the natural into too close proximity to the divine. From all this it appears that ἁγνεία is substantially the virtue of *reverentia*. But this being so,—and all passages of the New Testament in which ἁγνός, and words derived from it, appear, confirm it,—the idea seems altogether inappropriate to the exalted Christ. If we read καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἁγνὸς ἦν, that would not seem quite so strange, for we might suppose this *reverentia* to have been displayed by the Lord while on earth; His perpetual waiting on the will of the Father, which is so prominent in St. John's Gospel, is nothing but that holy fear. But can this be affirmed also of the glorified Christ? Is that now necessary to Him? can He indeed yet exercise that? The breath of disciplinary severity, which cannot be detached from the word ἁγνεία, may yet in a certain way be predicated even of the Exalted One. For His present glory He reached, according to Scripture, only through His absolute obedience, in virtue of His overcoming all temptations, and most entirely submitting Himself to the obedience of the Father's will. And that which He thus as man attained through exercise of the ἁγνεία is now still stamped upon the countenance of the Redeemer; even as He is beheld by the same St. John in the form and under the

aspect of the *ἀρνίον ἐσφαγμένον*. Nothing of what the Lord possessed upon earth has passed away; everything has become an eternal element of His personality. As with man nothing that he has experienced and has become passes away, but without it he would be through the ages of ages different from what he is, so also with the Lord. If, then, we are to become hereafter like Him, the apostle says, we must on our part appropriate to ourselves the *ἁγνεία* which the Lord exercised here below, in virtue of which He passed into His glory. There is no word which to the same extent as this expresses the whole grace and tenderness of the ethical habit.

Let us now gather up the connection of the strain now developed. St. John taught us, in ch. ii. 29, that we shall have confidence in the day of judgment only on the ground of the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, which will approve us as *γεγεννημένοι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*. This *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* is first of all, as we have seen, and as the apostle himself firmly establishes by the *ἔδωκεν*, a divine gift, entirely independent of human act, the gift, that is, of the Spirit, or, more particularly, of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. That is the beginning of all Christian development. We are called the sons of God (*κληθῶμεν*, ver. 1) not on account of anything we do, but in virtue of a divine act accomplished in us. But, on the other hand, we are to become, *ἐὰν φανερωθῇ*, like Christ; and that can take place only if the possibility of this likeness is on our part afforded by the *ἁγνίζειν*. Between that originating divine act, by which He gives us the Holy Spirit and declares us to be His children, and this conclusive and consummating divine act, by which He makes us like Christ, that is, glorifies us, there is thus a mediating human act or doing, which is called as to its internal characteristic *ἁγνεία*, and according to its outward expressions *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*. Thus, while God now beholds us as His sons on the ground of His gift, He will call us such in the judgment only if, in the strength of that gift, we have become sons in our act, that is, in the full transformation of our life. The subject, therefore, of the first three verses of our chapter is to establish the

ground of the assurance that the regenerate have confidence through the working of righteousness: the reason is contained in the exposition that the sonship as the gift of God is only the beginning, and that between this and the consummation (ver. 2) the *ἁγνεία*, or the moral character and life by which that beginning is to be confirmed and approved, is to be intermediately carried out.

VERSE 4.

Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ· καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.

The exhortation to the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* takes a form habitual to our apostle: first of all, he presents sharply to view the *ἁμαρτία*, its opposite, in order that thereby he may illustrate the meaning of the positive idea concerning which he has to speak. Here it is above all needful that we should regard anything that opposes the *δικαιοσύνην* as also a contradiction and absolute opposite to the divine nature, as contrary to God in its very essence; and that we should be careful not arbitrarily to restrict in any way the idea of sin. This definition and delimitation of the idea of *ἁμαρτία* is the subject of the fourth verse.

This word is not supposed, in the apostle's teaching, to convey a more comprehensive idea than *ἀνομία*, but to be strictly co-extensive with it: wherever, therefore, we are constrained to find *ἁμαρτία*. Nothing evil can to the Christian man be merely imperfection, or sin, so to speak, of the second degree: all is to him transgression of the law. Such is the strict meaning of the word *ἀνομία* even in classical Greek: it signifies not the conduct which proceeds from a state in which the law is either absent or unknown, it does not imply the exclusion of a *νόμος*, but rather expresses a guilt which casts aside the law already existing by actual neglect of its requirements, just as in the German *Ungesetzlichkeit* is interchangeable with *Widergesetzlichkeit*. And thus *ἀνομία*, when the word really occurs in its full meaning, is the very strongest definition or description of sin: the *νόμος*, indeed, according to St. Paul, makes sin generally exceeding sinful, and his emphatic word *ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς*

ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τοῦ νόμου (Gal. ii. 20), refers, precisely as St. James does, ch. ii. 10, ὅστις ὅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσει, πταίσει δὲ ἐν ἑνί, γέγονε πάντων ἔνοχος, to sin as definitely and strictly ἀνομία. This sunders man unfailingly, according to the very idea of man, from God. And the force of the apostle's declaration is, that ἀνομία is not a subordinate kind or a specifically aggravated degree of the ἁμαρτία, but that every ἁμαρτία is at the same time ἀνομία: in short, that the two ideas cannot be separated from each other.

The solemn earnestness of this proposition will appear more fully when we inquire what the νόμος is, and what is in St. John's estimation that νόμος, the violation or not following of which he speaks of in the ἀνομία. Most certainly it is not the universal law of conscience; for the New Testament never calls that νόμος; nor yet is it, however, the law of Moses or the old covenant as such. It is not this, first, because in the Old Testament the strict congruence or coincidence here declared between ἁμαρτία and ἀνομία did not yet exist: there were actually multitudes of ἁμαρτίαι, or moral delinquencies, for instance, in the connubial relations which were not forbidden by the letter of the Mosaic law, and were not therefore ἀνομία. Secondly, not the old law, because St. John furnishes no instance of the word νόμος, standing absolutely, being applied to the Mosaic law. It is true that in two passages (John vii. 49, xii. 34) it stands absolutely and as the definition of the Old Testament canon; but it must be observed that this is put into the mouth of the Pharisees only; and elsewhere there is the invariable addition ὁ νόμος ὑμῶν, ὁ νόμος Μωϋσέως, or the like. The reason of this is to be found in the fact that St. John starts originally (ch. i. 18) from the great principle of a sharp antithesis between the revelation of the law and the revelation through Christ. The Mosaic law was to him absolutely and only the law of the *Jews:* although this did no violence to the truth that Christ was born οὐ καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

Thus we are constrained to understand the νόμος, opposition to which is here expressed by the word ἀνομία,

of the divine law generally and universally, as it is revealed through Christ: the expression refers as well to the as it were new commandments given by the Saviour, as to the spirit of the Old Testament which our lawgiver has only released from the γράμμα enveloping it and thrust forward into the foreground. The uttered or revealed will of God is the νόμος, therefore ἀνομία is the opposition or rebellion of the lawless will against this will. Every ἁμαρτία, consequently, bears on its front the impress of ἀνομία as thus explained: every transgression or shortcoming in the widest sense of the word. But this view of the matter was not obvious to the churches here addressed, any more than it is obvious to us who have received this fundamental declaration in its true meaning: it is only too common in the very nature of men to establish distinctions and gradations among individual sins. As to the countless little failures and defects in common life, no man indeed who is filled with the Spirit of Christ will justify these, or even hold them as indifferent: but have we in relation to them a pressing consciousness of actual transgression of law? Do we look at the manifold discords of our life, and its deviations from the line of the Christian ideal as positive sins, every one of which immediately and certainly separates us from God, and can be expiated or abolished only by deep repentance and a distinct act of forgiveness? Most assuredly in multitudes of cases it is not so: such things are thought of as imperfections, but do not press on the consciousness as ἀνομία.

Now, St. John declares here that this current view of the matter as entertained by us is not of the truth; he lays this down as an axiom without any further demonstration: the demonstration of it is plain enough throughout the whole teaching of the apostle. If, in fact, the Spirit of Christ guides us into *all* truth, and therefore in every particular case shows us what is right, every sin must be an act of resistance to the drawing of the Spirit, and consequently of disobedience to the will of God as shown by the Spirit, and consequently against the νόμος Θεοῦ. I may not in the specific case have been conscious of the

drawing of the Spirit; but then that was my fault, and does not alter the position of things. As in the well-known passage in the Sermon on the Mount concerning the oath, the centre and pith of the explanation—too often unobserved—is that the mere utterance of yea must itself contain equally inviolable truth as the oath with its strong emphasis, the simple affirmation being lifted up to the height of the oath; so here in like manner it is the design of St. John to elevate every sin in its whole and wide domain to the degree of *ἀνομία*. There lies in every sin, of whatever kind for the rest it may be, the highest grade of guiltiness.

But this definition of the nature of sin, as it is contained in the words *ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία*, does not itself constitute the motive of the verse, but serves only for the illustration of the first member of it: he who committeth sin committeth also a breach of the law. The article before *ἁμαρτίαν* is not intended to distinguish a specific kind of sin from other kinds; for nothing whatever had been said about various kinds of sin in the present Epistle. It simply comprehends the diversified acts of human sin which may take place into the unity of one idea. He who *ἁμαρτίαν τινα ποιεῖ*, by that very fact also committeth *τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*; in every individual transgression the nature of *the sin* is manifested. The emphasis lies in the first hemistich plainly upon the *ποιεῖν*; for generally the apostle is here occupied with the doing of men. That the *ποιεῖν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν* is identical with the *ποιεῖν τὴν ἀνομίαν*, the apostle proves by the simple declaration that *ἁμαρτία* and *ἀνομία* are or ought to be for Christians interchangeable ideas. Similarity of nature implies or produces similarity of outward manifestation. Substantially, therefore, the second universal proposition of the verse is the demonstration or proof of the first particular proposition; but, inasmuch as they are bound together by the general *καί*, we see that the apostle reflects not precisely on the causal connection of the two propositions, but simply regards the second as the illustration of the first. Now, if every sin is, as well in its internal nature (ver. 4*b*) as in its outward

revelation (ver. 4*a*), *ἀνομία*, this assertion must bear to be applied to every specific case: hence the *πᾶς* placed first with strong emphasis, which in this particular section appears as abundant as in the section parallel to it in the organism of the Epistle, ch. i. 6 seq. (comp. vers. 3, 4, 6, down to 9, 10 seq.). It is precisely this emphatic assertion of the universal and exceptionless fact that is calculated to impress deeply the conviction that the question here is of every individual sin and of every individual sinner.

VERSE 5.

Καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη, ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ· καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστι.

Now, as every sinful work is express opposition to the commandment, the revealed will of God, so also it is further a contradiction as well to the manifestation of Christ (ver. 5*a*) as to His person (ver. 5*b*); for He appeared to no other end than *τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἆραι*. This phrase may have three meanings: either that Christ has borne our sins, or that He took them upon Himself, or that He has taken them away. At a glance it will be plain that these three interpretations are substantially very near to each other. If Jesus took sins upon Himself, that could be only in order to bear them; and if He did this, it was, however, for the sake of taking away, and with that design. On the other hand, if the word signifies here that He has borne them away, there are abundant reasons from other quarters to assure us that this was accomplished through His bearing them. Nevertheless, the decision of this point is not matter of indifference; for in the nature of the case St. John must have had expressly in view one or other of these elements.

The signification of bearing we must give up at once, because St. John never elsewhere uses *αἴρειν* in this meaning; it would be necessary, therefore, to resort to it only if the ordinary meaning was not sufficient. Our apostle uses the word either in an external and local sense for "lifting up anything," for example, *χεῖρας*, *λίθους*, and the like, or with the significance of "taking away." Now, if *αἴρειν* is here

to mean "take on Himself," the additional clause καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἁμαρτία οὐκ ἔστιν must signify only that *although* there was no sin in Him, nevertheless He suffered Himself to be treated as a sinner,—that, in fact, not His own sin, but the sin of others lay upon Him. But there is nothing here to indicate such a thought as that; and, moreover, in this case we should have read not ἔστιν, but ἦν. Further, the expression "take sin on Himself" would lead us to the atonement; and the idea would be strictly parallel with that expressed in ch. ii., that Jesus is the ἱλασμὸς περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. But any such remembrancer of the atonement must be supposed, as in the instance just quoted, to be applied as a consolation to those who are still and ever harassed with sin; and what the context here requires as its design is exhortation rather than comfort. In the case just supposed the meaning would be: as ye were the cause of such pains to your Lord, now show yourselves thankful; of this, however, there is not the faintest indication.

But there is perfect appropriateness in the thought of a remembrancer of the redemption from sin fully accomplished by our Lord, as that redemption consists in the "doing away of sin" (the ἡμῶν, "our sins," must be struck out). If Jesus put away sins, then no one has any part in Him who suffers himself to have any confederacy with sin.

And by what means was this putting away accomplished, and the new man who τὴν δικαιοσύνην ποιεῖ implanted instead? This is answered by the ἐφανερώθη. It is clear that the expression is larger than πάσχειν or ἀποθνήσκειν, of which, when redemption is in question, we usually think first of all; but it is also quite distinct from the εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐλήλυθεν or the σὰρξ ἐγένετο. On the one hand, it signifies less than those phrases, inasmuch as the manner in which His manifestation was consummated is not indicated; while at the same time more than they, inasmuch as it does declare that before the passion His work was actually efficient, although by it alone it was brought to full manifestation. The entire contents of the prologue, John i. 1–13, —that the Logos had been from the beginning the light and life of the world, but by means of His incarnation

had manifested Himself as such in the highest sense,—lies wrapped up germinally in the φανερουῦσθαι. This self-manifestation was ordered expressly with this design (ἵνα), that sin should be made to disappear. In the fact that the ζωή as such is made manifest, the power of death is substantially taken away through its manifestation; in the fact that the φῶς ἀληθινόν shineth, the darkness recedes immediately and in virtue of its very shining: by a natural necessity the design of our Lord is accomplished; and in reality His entire life, which is here comprehended in the ἐφανερώθη, has not only a redeeming aim and tendency, but also a redeeming power. Through His whole influence, word, suffering, dying, rising again,—that is, through the whole process of His φανέρωσις taken on all sides,—He implanted in the world subjected to sin the germ of sinlessness. According to the apostle's view, this power was not wrapped up and concluded in His death, although it was in His death that this power was pre-eminently unfolded.

The parallel passage, John i. 29, confirms this view of the matter; and that is peculiarly important, because the two passages cannot well be separated from each other. There we read, ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ κόσμου. The present participle in this sentence does not require to be explained by the theory that St. John brings forward into the present the element of Christ's death; nor on the principle that the present is chosen because the effects of that death always continue to the time that now is: on either of these suppositions the present would really be treated as the future. The participle must be understood in its most proper and distinctive meaning. Already at that very time the Lord was in act to take away the sin of the world, because He was such through His whole life; already at that time He was the ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, because He was so through His whole life, and not first in His death became the Lamb.

This aspect of the matter would have much more importance attached to it, and it would exert a healthier influence on our entire soteriology, if we conceived more

justly and laid to heart more simply the words of Matt. viii. 17. The evangelist there regards the work of Christ as already, in the first period of it, fulfilling the prophetic word, *τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβε καὶ τὰς νόσους ἡμῶν ἐβάστασεν*: this prophetic word we are accustomed to refer to the death of Christ; but the evangelist's use of it points directly to the view we have just been exhibiting and defending. For if our Lord through His whole activity, and specifically in His healing of the sick, *bore* our sorrow, so also throughout His whole life He took it away; for the former was a reality only on account of the latter. In John i. 29 we certainly find, in connection with the redeeming and delivering element, which is represented by *αἴρειν*, the atoning element also, as contained in the expression *ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*; for even if we consider this to refer at once to the paschal lamb, at any rate there was an expiating and therefore sacrificial characteristic in it. It is indeed otherwise in our passage: here the *υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ* is the subject: the Son of God was manifested in order to abolish sin, establish His kingdom, and destroy the kingdom of the devil (ver. 8); here, therefore, prominence is given, not to the form of a Servant which our Lord assumed in order to our reconciliation with God, but to the might of the Ruler who has brought to light life and our immortality of being.

Thus the only two passages (ours and the parallel in the Gospel) which have been adduced against the interpretation of *αἴρειν* as take away, have been seen to admit it as possible, and our own to require it absolutely. It is useless, in opposition, to urge, finally, that *αἴρειν* is the translation of נָשָׂא, and that therefore it must mean bear, or at least to take upon Himself. Not only may be opposed to this the fact that the Septuagint invariably reproduces "bear" by *φέρειν* and the like, but that the נָשָׂא, particularly in its combination with פֶּשַׁע, has precisely the meaning of taking away sin; compare Ps. xxxii. 1. Thus the Old Testament gives our interpretation its full sanction.

The second clause of the verse is externally to be taken as a leading proposition; for the Johannaean diction is so far Hebraizing, that it prefers the juxtaposition or co-

ordination of sentences to their subordination; whence it sometimes happens that the second member of a subordinate clause is changed into a main proposition. It is precisely so here. But if we take the second hemistich as only formally independent, it is substantially to be regarded as dependent on the *οἴδατε*. But then what is the relation of the clause, linked with it by *καί*, introducing the thought of the righteousness of Jesus, to the preceding thought of His redeeming work? When we observe that the verse following is joined on to the close of this one,—as there is no sin in Jesus, there ought not to be sin in him who, for his part, belongs to Jesus,—and thus that the *ἁμαρτίαν ἆραι* apparently comes no further into consideration, we shall obviously see in the words *ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν* the apostle's more particular specification of the grounds of the *ἁμαρτίας ἆραι*. That being the case, the second hemistich only bringing out into prominence the fundamental thought of the first, this latter must be regarded as really included in the reference when we find that the following verse is formally linked only to the second clause. The concluding words of the verse thus indicate the way in which Jesus has brought to effect the *ἁμαρτίας ἆραι*: it is because He manifested Himself as the sinless one, and through that same manifestation communicated His sinlessness to men also. For if a mere human word or work can produce a transforming effect on him to whom it is communicated, how much more will the revelation of the righteousness of Christ be able to act transformingly on the recipients of that revelation! For the rest, *ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν* is by no means the equivalent of *ἁγνός ἐστι* in ver. 3: the latter marks especially the internal *habitus* of the character, on the ground of which sinning is impossible; the former refers rather to the expressions of that internal quality.

VERSE 6.

Πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων, οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων, οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν, οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.

When, therefore, the apostle deduces from the end of the

manifestation of Jesus, and then more particularly from the nature of Him who appeared, that sin and belonging to the Lord are perfectly irreconcilable opposites, this is logically altogether clear and incontrovertible. But, on the other hand, there is much that rises up against the simple and unlimited acknowledgment of the saying before us: not only does the common Christian consciousness which—despite sin still operative in believers—still clings to the fact of sonship to God revolt against it, but also this exaggeration of the antithesis seems not to harmonize with our Epistle itself. While in our verse the apostle makes it emphatic that every one who sins neither has nor can have had any fellowship with the Lord, he has notwithstanding, in ch. i. 8–10, not only recognised the presence of sin in believers, but even described their denial of it as an essential lie, and as a clear token of the absence of fellowship with the Lord. Hence it is easily to be understood that many industrious attempts have been made to soften down the meaning of our verse, and thus to reconcile it with clear and express declarations elsewhere. But all these efforts are discredited by the phraseology and the context of our passage. It has been attempted to explain *ἁμαρτάνειν* as continuing in sin; but the arbitrariness of such an exegesis is manifest at once. And if the sins are limited to very grave sins, such as the sin unto death, this is evidently contradictory to the context and spirit of the argument, in which the apostle is simply denying every distinction between sin and sin, and exhibiting every *ἁμαρτία* as also an *ἀνομία*. But not less erroneous is the explanation that the Christian does not in fact sin, because, as a Christian and according to his new man, he cannot sin, but as such cherishes nothing but hatred against the sin which, according to his old man, he commits. For although I may hate the sin which I do, it still remains sin; and as it is in me, it cannot possibly be said of me that I sin not: granted that I cannot in my new man sin, nevertheless it is the I, my person, which is the sinning subject. Generally, the view cannot be psychologically sustained which would introduce a total cleavage of the one human constitution,

making the half of the man a sinner—that is, the old man—at the very time that the other half is under the influence of the Holy Spirit. All subterfuges of this and of similar kinds are exploded by a touch of the passage itself. We have seen that the apostle pleads against every sin as *ἀνομία*; and that, further, according to the Scripture, every *ἀνομία* inevitably separates from God. Then it follows directly and most closely from these premises, that every sin, be it what it may, sunders from God; and that he who commits it can have no communion with Him. How such a rigid scriptural utterance as this can be reconciled with the rest of Scripture is another and a second question, which we leave at present unconsidered. It is enough now to establish that St. John did lay down the propositions we now consider.

The second half of the verse gives us the converse of the proposition we have been studying, but in such a way that its idea is only made essentially more intense. The thought of the former clause, *πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει*, is in itself not absolutely inexplicable: it might be said that the sinning man had fellowship with God, and will have it again; and that his sin has also interrupted that fellowship. But all this is taken away by the second clause, which makes it more startling than ever: the *μένειν* of the former does seem, indeed, to presuppose that there had been an actual past union with God; but here this is expressly denied, for we read: *πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν*. If we had the present tense in each case instead of the perfect, the meaning of the latter clause would be very much the same as that of the former: supposing that in the critical time of sinning the image of the Lord is not on the table of my heart, might it not have been there before though it is not there now? The *ἑωρακέναι* here might be explained by the same word in ver. 2. It is true that they do not refer to the same object: in ver. 2 the glorified Son of God is the object beheld; but He cannot be meant in our present passage. He cannot according to the connection; and because, simply, we have no image in our minds of the glorified Christ, nor can our

thoughts of Him serve us here in the least degree. Here the object beheld is the Lord as He was once manifested, ἐφανερώθη, and as He in fact in whom ἁμαρτία οὐκ ἔστιν. Thus the ἑωρακέναι refers to the Lord not καθὼς ἔστιν, but καθὼς ἦν: just as the apostles have depicted Him in His life and sufferings before our eyes, as if in fact He had been crucified amongst ourselves (Gal. iii. 1, after Luther). Yet even if the two beholdings in this and the second verse are different as to the aspect of the object beheld, the seeing itself is of the very same nature, and is followed in both cases by the same results. When we behold the glorified Lord we shall be changed into the same image, and be in fact glorified ourselves; and so here likewise, he who has truly beheld the Sinless One should through this beholding himself become sinless. This consequence is so express to the apostle's mind as to bring out the declaration, that he who is not sinless proves by that very fact his never having yet beheld the Lord.

Of course it needs not to be insisted on that the seeing here meant does not consist in historical knowledge of Christ; but that such a perception is meant as is brought about by the instrumentality of the Spirit of Christ Himself, whose office is to bring to remembrance of the disciples both Him and all that He has said. Hence the apostle goes on to say that the sinning man, as he has not seen the Lord, so also he "has not known Him." This position after ὁρᾶν is intended to stamp the γινώσκειν as either a higher grade or as a consequence of the seeing. It is not that ὁρᾶν is a figurative expression, and γινώσκειν its translation into fact: this is evident partly from the οὐδέ itself, which points to a distinction between the ideas which it divides, and partly from the circumstance that to St. John the ὁρᾶν is by no means a figure, but the standing expression for a spiritual energy which absolutely refuses to be translated into anything else. The difference between the two words is rather this, that ὁρᾶν indicates the intuition, the act in virtue of which I take something *immediately* into myself or my mind; while γινώσκειν defines the apprehension or knowledge which is found as the consequence of this

intuition,—that is, the consciousness and the means of it, its reconciliation with all the other objects of my thinking. Consequently the γινώσκειν is the result of the ὁρᾶν: the former without the latter would be an impossibility. It is customary with the Scripture generally to take the word γινώσκειν with a specially emphatic meaning. Thus, when in Matt. vii. 23 the Lord says to those who would bring to His mind their great deeds: οὐδέποτε ἔγνων ὑμᾶς. And yet it is unimaginable that a προφητεύειν, a δαίμονας ἐκβάλλειν, *in the name of Jesus*, could be wrought without some corresponding relation to the Lord behind them; but the Lord denies any such relation. This is substantially the same case as that in our verse, and corresponds to its assertion that he who sinneth never had fellowship with the Lord. The only question is, how we are to understand a doctrine of Scripture which is so clearly expressed.

The history of St. Paul's conversion may give us help. It is said there, on the one hand, that the apostle's companions had not heard the voice which spoke to him (Acts xxii. 9); and, on the other, that they had heard it (Acts ix. 7). There is no contradiction here; for in the one case it is declared that they heard a sound and perceived a voice, while in the other it is said that they did not hear the words of this voice. It was the same with the heavenly voice which the Lord heard in John xii. 28: some heard the sound as it were only of thunder; others discerned an angel's voice; the disciples alone heard the words which were pronounced. In this latter case it might have been said of the people that they heard a voice as well as the seemingly direct contrary. In both the examples thus adduced it might have been said that nothing was heard, inasmuch as that was not heard which was properly to be heard. The relation in our present passage between seeing and knowing is precisely similar. St. John uses them here, as in Acts xxii. 9 the hearing is used, with an emphatic meaning: the sinning man demonstrates by his sin, that knowing in the strict sense cannot be predicated of him; for had he really known, he could not have sinned. But that does not exclude the possibility that elsewhere

the same ideas may be found with a more lax application. Even from the hem of our Saviour's garment a virtue issued, and there was healing in the apostle's handkerchief; but he who had experienced the healing power of the handkerchief was far from being on that account acquainted with all the treasures that flowed from the spirit of the apostle. We may here and there and in some various degrees submit to the influence of the Holy Ghost, and break off many a sin; but so long as sin is still in us, it is proved that we have seen only the hem of the Lord's garment, not His very nature; for His nature is δικαιοσύνη, and he who had seen and known Him as δίκαιος must through that seeing have become himself sinless.

Now let us sum up the meaning of the verse. He who abideth in Christ sinneth not. The present does not express precisely the actual now, but a continuing condition: in him in whom the μένειν has become a reality, for μένειν carries with it the idea of abiding continuously. In him there is the abiding condition of the οὐχ ἁμαρτάνειν. Again, on the other hand, in the case of him who sinneth, such an abiding state has not been attained: the actings of the ὁρᾶν and γινώσκειν are—let the perfects be observed—not accomplished facts. Then the sum is: every sin demonstrates that we are not found in the fellowship of the Lord.

Verse 7.

Τεκνία, μηδεὶς πλανάτω ὑμᾶς· ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστι, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν.

But this thought is too keen, too repellent to the natural man, for reception in this plain form, and without qualification. Hence follows the express exhortation not to be led astray by opposite and erroneous thoughts. The direct appeal by no means introduces a new thought; but here as everywhere its aim is to bring close home the apostolic utterance to the individual reader. The words μηδεὶς πλανάτω ὑμᾶς lead at once to the supposition that the church was in danger of giving heed to such spirits of error; but we must not overlook the fact that the tempta-

tion to lower views is not supposed to lie in any definite relation to others and in any definite sect, but is always grounded on the thoughtlessness of the natural man. We are too often content with the consciousness that we stand in some special relation to the Lord, and come to regard sin as an unavoidable evil which is not so very hurtful as might be thought. In opposition to this, the apostle makes it emphatic that the only test, the only sure evidence, of the righteousness of believing is the righteousness of living: where the latter is wanting, there must be something fundamentally wrong in the former. The stress of the seventh verse lies on the *ποιεῖν*: he only is righteous whose righteousness is approved in act. As we read in John iii. 31, *ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς, ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστι*,—he whose origin is the earth has in fact an earthly origin, bears its signature in himself,—so it is here with the *ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν*: he who is righteous must be simply *righteous*, and bear the stamp of righteousness on himself. It is then added that this righteousness, thus approving itself, makes us like the righteous Christ. This does not mean to say that by such a procedure we may attain to a specially distinguished kind of righteousness, such, namely, as Christ had; for the apostle in this present connection knows nothing about gradations in righteousness any more than he acknowledges gradations in sin. The clause *καθὼς κ.τ.λ.* rather points back to ver. 3: there it was said that the goal of our earthly development is the *ἁγνεία* of Christ; and this we are supposed in the present words of St. John to reach in the doing of righteousness.

VERSE 8.

Ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν. ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει. Εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

As we in this way enter into fellowship with the Lord, so through the *ποιεῖν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν* we enter into fellowship with the devil: this is, generally, the matter of the eighth verse. The latter part of it first of all demands our attention; as it in fact furnishes the logical basis of the

former. Because the devil sinneth from the beginning, do all sinners *therefore* spring from him? There is certainly a suspicious tone of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* about this. But all depends on the right view of ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. The idea of the ἀρχή is applied in such manifold ways, that it must in every individual case be explained by the context. The interpretation that the devil sins from the beginning of his being or existence is by no means justified by the expression; for the absolutely general ἀπ' ἀρχῆς would be quite unsuitable to such a notion. The only tolerable reference is to the ἁμαρτάνειν: the devil was the origin of sinning, or it made its beginning in him. When that beginning of sin and of his sinning took place is not here mentioned: it is enough that his sin was the first. But there is assuredly no reason, and it would be entirely wrong, to understand this beginning of the fall of Adam. What allusion can there be in the general and indefinite ἀπ' ἀρχῆς to the fall of *man?* It is of no use to appeal to John viii. 14 in favour of such an interpretation: that passage affirms that the devil was a murderer of man from the beginning; but the ἀπ' ἀρχῆς has there its closer definition in the ἀνθρωποκτόνος, he could have been such a murderer only when men began to exist, and thus the context in the cited passage absolutely determines the reference of ἀπ' ἀρχῆς to the paradisiacal history. But here we have no closer definition of the ἀπ' ἀρχῆς; and it must therefore be referred to the beginning of sin in general, to the act by which the devil became the devil. The idea of sin through him first came into life and reality. Thus viewed, the thought is the same as would have been expressed by ἐν ἀρχῇ or πρῶτος ὁ διάβολος ἡμάρτηκεν; and that this form was not selected, is to be accounted for by the fact that the writer thinks of his sin and would have us think of it, not as one act once performed, but as the permanent habit and at the same time the original deed of sinning. The combination of these two ideas hardly allows any other expression to be used than that which the apostle employs.

Thus the clause ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει only

declares really that the devil before any other being sinned, and has since been in the continual act and habit of sinning. Now again, consequently, the question arises with new force, how it follows from this that every later sin, or here human sin as such, springs from the devil, and may be traced to diabolical causality. Is it not quite conceivable that man might have sinned, after the devil indeed, but independently of him; and this being only possible, is not the deduction of St. John a vain one? But though we do not find it established in the idea of the *first* sin, we do find it in the idea of the first *sin*, that all successive sinful creatures must enter into a state of dependence on the first one. Sin has just been described as *ἀνομία*; it therefore presupposes a *νόμος*; this, again, a Lord who gives the law; and he who rebels against the law thereby makes himself into a lord. This establishes the fact that he who first falls from God places himself, in virtue of this apostasy, over against God, and therefore in rivalry to His kingdom: in fact, setting up, though at first only in a germinal way, a kingdom of evil in opposition to it. No sinner that follows can erect a third kingdom, but must through his sin enter into the kingdom already opposed to God, incorporating himself into it as a member. Whether he wills it or not, whether he knows it or not, he makes himself dependent on the originator and representative of this kingdom. But more than this: after these two kingdoms, that of the light and that of the darkness, are founded, no one can any longer be good or evil of himself from his own most proper impulse; but because he is placed in the midst of the two kingdoms in their concrete reality, he necessarily receives solicitations from both sides to determine his action: thus, if he sins, his sin proceeds not from his own, but *ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου*; and his sinning is the evidence that he is *ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου*. Thus the deduction of the apostle is perfectly just; only it is based, not on the *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* of itself, but on the *ἁμαρτάνειν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*. That the spiritual dependence of human sin on sin Satanic, here only expressed as a logical necessity, was an actual fact in human history needs no demonstration in the light of biblical and

especially Johannaean teaching. With our apostle beyond all others it is customary to establish the Satanic origin of sin. As, in the Pauline view, the sin of Adam was not only the temporal beginning of evil, but also the principle of all sin in his descendants, so stands it when, with St. John, we carry up the matter a stage further, in regard to the relation of human sin to that of Satan. True as it is that every man is enticed or drawn away of his *ἰδία ἐπιθυμία*, it is equally true that every sin is a work of the devil, in a certain sense an incarnation of devilish thoughts. Just as the *πόρνοι*, according to St. Paul, in virtue of their *πορνεία* belong no longer to themselves but to the *πόρνη*, so does the sinner belong, in virtue of his sin, no longer to himself, but has become a member and a living stone in the kingdom of Satan.

The thoughts we have indicated are not only necessary consequences of the expression *ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστί*, but are also needful to enable us to understand the second hemistich of the verse. The proposition, that Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, is parallel with that other in ver. 5, that He appeared *τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄραι*. The works of the devil are identical with our sins. But they can bear that denomination only if each of them has in fact the devil for their proper agent, is a reflection of Satanic thoughts, and a realization of Satanic tendencies. It is this relation which explains the expression *λύειν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου* exactly to the very letter. The devil will indeed never cease to be evil; to restore him to goodness the Lord did not appear; but to be evil is not an *ἔργον*. A work requires a material to be fashioned. Without the material to be wrought upon, no created being can perform a work. Therefore the devil also requires for his work matter which he can impregnate with his thoughts. This material is the earth, and the men upon it. This being withdrawn from him, he may indeed still be evil, but he can no longer accomplish evil by *ἔργοις πονηροῖς*. From this point of view we understand how, in the well-known narrative of the Gadarene demoniacs, the devils ask the Lord permission

to enter the swine: they seek the matter which they may destroy; if men no longer are available, they desire at least some equivalent. If from Satan is taken away all material, that is his consummate misery. Absolutely not to be able to accomplish the evil lusts of his heart, to be obliged—let the word be pardoned—to consume his own wretchedness in himself, to find no sphere of activity while yet burning with desire for it: that is the acme of unblessedness. If men are loosed from Satan (Luke xiii. 17), then is he bound, the nerves of his energy are restrained. Conversely, if Satan is loosed (Rev. xx. 7), it means that he can bind men and does bind them. Thus the expression λύειν has justice done to it. All loosing presupposes a dissolution into the constituent elements. The devil uses in his activity his evil lust on the one hand, and, on the other, the material in which it becomes flesh. To take from him this material is to resolve his works into their elements, and thus to cause that they can no longer come to effect. This λύειν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου has been accomplished by the Lord through the fact of His manifestation: ἐφανερώθη. The expression is obviously to be taken in the same generality as in ver. 5. Through the appearance of the light the darkness loses its domain and is destroyed. And He who appears is with deep propriety described here as υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. As St. Paul in Rom. v. places Christ as the bringer of righteousness over against Adam as the cause of sin, so St. John here, in harmony with his higher position, places Him over against Satan himself. Hence we find that, while in Rom. v. the Lord is described as ἄνθρωπος, here He is the υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ: the sin of the first *man* is taken away by the righteousness of the second *Adam;* but in the place of the kingdom of the *devil* enters the kingdom of the *Son of God.*

Let us now glance, in conclusion, at the strain of the whole verse. It contains the antithesis of ver. 7. This had, by means of the καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν, declared that righteousness brings us into union with the Lord; the new verse, conversely, draws the conclusion that sin proves

us to be members of the Satanic kingdom. It is the same severity which we were obliged to recognise in ver. 6: there it was said that every sin gives proof that we have not yet known the Lord; here it is said to show that we belong to Satan. This bondage to Satan, however, the Lord in His manifestation purposed to abolish. Hence the latter clause obviously corresponds to ver. 5; just as similarly the first part of our verse corresponds to ver. 4. The fourth and fifth verses exhibit sin as a principle opposed to God and to Christ; here it is exhibited as subjection to the devil, yea, as resistance to the only means of the only redemption from it.

Verses 9, 10*a*.

Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει· καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται. Ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστι τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου.

To the declaration of ver. 8*a*, that he who sinneth is of the devil, the proposition of ver. 9 is attached, that he who is born of God sinneth not. But this latter is by no means to be understood as an antithesis to the former verse; for this ver. 8 was itself the negative counterpart of the positive contained in ver. 7. We must rather take ver. 9 as strictly connected with ver. 10*a*, and as a recapitulation of the whole section; in such a way, however, that ver. 9 briefly sums up the matter of this section itself, and then ver. 10*a* indicates its place in the whole organism of the latter, pointing to the result which has been gained by the development of it.

Let us first look more closely at the context of ver. 9. Its recapitulation takes the form of two clauses, each of which has its own reason briefly assigned. It is clear that in the second clause the emphasis rests upon the *οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν*, the impossibility that a child of God should sin is made prominent; accordingly, the emphasis in the first clause can fall only on the *οὐ ποιεῖ ἁμαρτίαν*, that is, upon the actual condition and character of God's children: this latter, however, not being viewed as a

transitory fact; for the present *ποιεῖ* marks it as an abiding and continuous state. Thus the actual character, and the internal necessity of that character, of the regenerate are the two affirmations of our verse, and to these two main propositions most precisely correspond the two subordinate ones introduced by *ὅτι* to establish the others. In the former of them the emphasis falls on the *μένει*: because God (we leave for a while unconsidered the *σπέρμα*) *abideth* in such a man, his not sinning is a permanent condition or state. In the latter the emphasis is on the *Θεοῦ*: because he is born of *God*, in whom there is no alternation of light and darkness, of whom we know that He is essentially and of necessity righteous (ch. ii. 29), therefore the regenerate is necessarily righteous. We observe that the positive *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, which recurred again and again in the previous verses, is exchanged throughout the present verse for the negative *οὐχ ἁμαρτάνειν*; and this fact has the same reason as that which governs the predominant negative in the decalogue. Because in man, as he is by nature, evil forms the paramount principle, the negative definition of the new man as one free from sin is more obvious than the positive one of his being righteous.

It has been remarked that ver. 10*a* indicates the place which the completed section has in the organic whole of the Epistle. The emphasis falls therefore on the *φανερά*. In ch. ii. 28 seq. it had been said that the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* imparts the true *παῤῥησία* in the day of judgment: this is demonstrated with the help of the idea *φανερὸν γενέσθαι*. The doing of righteousness makes the nature inherent in me manifest, withdraws it from the sphere of delusion or self-deception; and this revelation of my sonship to myself produces the effect of parrhesia or strong confidence. In other words, if I am to have *παῤῥησία* in the judgment, I must have become absolutely assured of my filial relation to God—that must have become to me a *φανερόν*; but only through its confirmation in my life can that have taken place. This confirmation in deed, the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, is therefore in the third chapter

represented as the necessary result of sonship to God; and ver. 10 draws the final conclusion, inasmuch as it connects the whole of what precedes with ch. ii. 28 seq. by showing that the external act makes manifest the internal character of the man.

There are only two individual expressions in the verses we now consider which demand elucidation. One is the *σπέρμα τοῦ Θεοῦ* which is said to be in the new man. There is not the slightest justification for referring this phrase to the word of God, after the analogy of Matt. xiii. or 1 Pet. i. 23; for in the context of this passage, and in the Epistle generally, this is not spoken of in any sense. The word is entirely unique here; and the thing intended can be made plain only by entering into the figure used. The human seed is the germ whence a new man proceeds, which developes into man; accordingly the spiritual seed is the divine principle, the divine germ, out of which the new spiritual man is developed. This principle is, according to John iii. 5, the *πνεῦμα*: the Divine Spirit, viewed as seed or *σπέρμα*, is the power of life entering into the man, the living germ sinking down into his nature. As, through the *σπέρμα* coming from the human parent, the newly-begotten man becomes a child of his father, because he simply springs from the nature of this man, so we are the children of God in virtue of the community of nature with God, because we have grown out of His I, His Spirit. And thus *σπέρμα μένει*, the seed abideth: it is not that a single impulse proceeds from it, and it then is again withdrawn, but it unfolds a continuous energy. And it abides *ἐν αὐτῷ*; it works not as the quickening ray of the sun works upon the plant by energy from without, but it developes its directing and fashioning power and activity from within outwardly.

The second expression which demands special attention is that of *τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου*, ver. 10. On the one hand, it is clear that this definition is a distinct correlative of the closely connected *τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ*; the word *τέκνα* must in the two cases have the same meaning. On the other hand, it is plain that, in the meaning which we attach to the

expression τέκνα Θεοῦ in ver. 1, it can have no distinct correlative. The sonship there we understood to be not merely ethical, but a relation of being, a real communication of the divine nature; and in this sense there can be no τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου. God can indeed beget life, but Satan cannot. The question then arises, whether we will give up the former explanation of τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ in favour of a more general meaning, and regard the expression as signifying a purely ethical relation, or whether, considering that in the tenth verse the τέκνα Θεοῦ and διαβόλου must necessarily be understood alike, we may assume a different meaning of the term τέκνα in the tenth and first verses of the chapter. It is to be taken for granted that any such change in the meaning must receive its warranty in some way from the apostle himself. Now, as to the beginning of this chapter, which is relatively the end of the preceding, we cannot by any means surrender the meaning of the sonship established there. It is certainly Johannaean, it is established by the one expression of the Gospel, "born of water and of the Spirit," and it will be found confirmed by the fourth chapter of our Epistle. And in our ch. iii. 1 it is further rendered necessary by the word ἔδωκεν. An ethical relation is not a gift of God; the moral habit of the man rests naturally not upon a mere divine bestowment, but also upon the human co-operation in act. The ethical relation of the child of God is spoken of from ver. 3 onward: up to that point the ground of nature which is the condition of that act is alone treated of. Finally, there can be no doubt that in ch. ii. 29 the γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, the confirmation of which in the deeds of righteousness is in question, cannot be identical with those confirming deeds of righteousness themselves; and, as ch. iii. 1 resumes that description in τέκνα Θεοῦ, it must there have the same meaning. We must therefore hold fast the explanation of sonship given in ch. iii. 1. But then it is obvious that the description τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου, and accordingly also that of τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ in ver. 10, will tolerate only an ethical interpretation. When St. Paul calls Elymas υἱὸς διαβόλου, and Christ in St. John's Gospel

calls the devil the father of the Jews, these expressions say no more than what is elsewhere meant by being ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου: the sense is that of an ethical dependence, the being under the influence of the devil, which, however, by no means constitutes the inpouring of a devilish spirit. Accordingly, the expression τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ in ver. 10*a* will say no more than the parallel ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ in ver. 10*b*. But how can we reconcile ourselves to accept the same phrase in the same section according to two different meanings? The answer is, because of the changed view of our relation to God which has intermediately entered. As we have seen in the section ch. iii. 1–3, the apostle shows that sonship as a gift, according to ver. 1, is not the basis on which the final consummation of the man rests, but the ethical development springing from that as its principle. The objective divine act of begetting requires the subjective unfolding of the new nature on the part of man. Thus also in the tenth verse reference is no longer made to the regenerate ground of nature which is the principle of all religious development, but to the ethical position which the regenerate has acquired, of course always on the ground of that divine principle. Hence it is natural that the phrase τέκνον τοῦ Θεοῦ must no longer be taken in that earlier metaphysical sense; the ethical likeness to God is now the predominant idea; and therefore it can be employed as the correlative of τέκνον τοῦ διαβόλου.

Let us now look at the section here ended as a whole, and first with regard to its form. We shall find the same scheme of construction which was adopted in ch. i. and ii.: not indeed as if the apostle wrote according to a plan fore-arranged down to the minutest analysis; we see only the clear and methodical spirit of the writer involuntarily adopting an order and measure which appears in the harmonious articulation of his Epistle. We note in ch. iii. 1–10 two sub-sections, vers. 1–3 and vers. 4–10. The former of these gives the substructure of the latter, by showing to what extent at the final judgment, to which ch. ii. 28 had pointed, works come into consideration: because, namely, the question will then be what we have

become through the divine gift of regeneration, in order that it may then be given to him who hath, that he may have more abundance. The second sub-section, which introduces the proof that on the ground of *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* we become assured of our sonship, is constructed with extreme symmetry. It is complete in four members: vers. 4, 5, ver. 6, vers. 7, 8, vers. 9, 10*a*, each of which again consists of two clauses. The first of these four members lays the foundation of the evidence, exhibiting sin as a principle absolutely opposed to God (*ἀνομία*, ver. 4), and absolutely opposed to Christ (ver. 5). The last member, vers. 9, 10*a*, recapitulates the whole demonstration (ver. 9), and at the same time exhibits the result gained on the whole (ver. 10) with reference to the purpose of the section. The two intermediate members furnish the proper assertion of the antithesis: *ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι* and righteousness of life, sin and *εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου*, are interchangeable ideas. The whole discussion proceeds in the antithetical form with which ch. i. and ii. have made us familiar. The first pair of antitheses are in ver. 6, the second in vers. 7 and 8. After the Johannaean manner, the second pair throw a stronger light on the antithesis, the opposites being carried up to their principles: righteousness being referred to Christ (*καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστι*), and sin being referred to the devil.

Clear and analytical as is the form of the section, and exact as is the logic pervading it, its several clauses are full of difficulties. The whole finds its keenest point in the assertion that he who is born of God cannot sin. When examining ver. 6, we saw that this proposition seems opposed as well to Christian experience as to St. John's own doctrine, which, addressed to the regenerate children of God (ch. ii. 13 seq., iii. 2), nevertheless urges them to the confession of sin. We have also come to the conviction that the force of our passage must not be softened down, as also that Christian experience cannot be explained away. It is resorting to a hopeless expedient to say that the Christian does not practise sin, but suffers it. Such affirmations as these seem excellent enough, but in fact they

are unmeaning. It ought not to be denied that in a certain sense sin is actually to the Christian matter of passive endurance—he feels himself under an alien and hostile power. Such was the experience of St. Paul in Rom. vii. But this truth would be applicable in the present case only if the *guilt* of sin ceased,—that is, if human freedom were not disparaged in connection with these failings: for a mere accident of evil cannot be matter of personal responsibility. But it was not St. John's intention to teach this; every sin, even of the Christian man, is the free act of the will,—though, it may be, not altogether spontaneous,—and is sin therefore in the fullest sense. Moreover, this distinction between doing and suffering sin is out of the question in our passage, as may be seen in the change between *ποιεῖν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν* and the simple *ἁμαρτάνειν*. In order to reach the solution of the difficulty, let us look more narrowly at its proper bearing. The edge of it does not lie in the word, "he that sinneth is of the devil," viewed *in itself*. If we had this alone, it must appear to us a frightful truth; but we should be constrained in the end to bow before the word of Scripture, and say: "Then are we all, since we all sin, not children of God." The difficulty lies rather in the opposition between this word and the oft-repeated recognition of our sonship on the part of the apostle. There are, however, two things which serve to throw some light on the embarrassment. One is the distinction between the sense in which St. John speaks of our sonship in ch. iii. 1, and that in which he speaks of it from ver. 4 onwards; the other, connected with this, is that in ver. 4 seq. he takes his stand at the day of judgment.

The former point, the twofold meaning of *τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, has forced itself as a necessity on our previous exposition. Our sonship is first considered as a divine gift, independent of all human act (*δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατήρ*, ver. 1); in virtue of this gift, which consists of the impartation of His Spirit, *God beholds us as His children;* in virtue of it we have the forgiveness of sins, for through this Spirit we have become one with Christ, the God-man, whose

Spirit He is, members of His body, partakers of all that He has wrought. Through this act of God we are, *before* any corresponding acts on our part, His children: as He will also have us regarded by men (*κληθῶμεν*). But what we now *are* as the result of a divine act, we must *become* as the result of our own deeds; the principle of righteousness which the *πνεῦμα* implants in us must develope itself into realization; the divine gift must be appropriated and made our own. A field which had hitherto borne thorns and thistles, but in which the corn is sown, is, in virtue of the seed in it, a field of wheat; its owner speaks of it as such, and treats it as such. But if the ground is stony, so that the good seed cannot germinate freely, but produces weeds, and only weeds, it is thenceforward, regarded from the result, no field of corn. The owner was justified in regarding it, and bound to regard it, first as a wheat-field; but after the good seed has been choked, the right and obligation so to regard it cease. So is it with men. Through the gift of the Spirit, the *σπέρμα Θεοῦ*, we are children of God; we are *ἅγιοι*, that is, appointed to His service, *καὶ ἠγαπημένοι*, according to the divine act and destination. But as, in the comparison just used, the seed must be developed and productive if the field is to be, not only according to the owner's purpose, but also in reality, a field of wheat, so we also must place our whole life under the influence of the Spirit, and be swayed altogether by His power, that is, *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*. Now, that by *τέκνα Θεοῦ*, from ver. 4 onwards, only those are to be understood who, on the ground of the divine generation of ver. 1, have become that in their character which they had already been in their destination, we have established in our exposition of the structure of the whole section; it is evident also from the correlation of *τέκνα Θεοῦ* and *τέκνα διαβόλου*, ver. 10, and is demanded by the expressions *ἑώρακεν, ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν* in ver. 6, both these being appropriating activities by which I receive into my consciousness something objectively existing and real. In this way it becomes clear how the same persons are called children of God, and yet have this name denied to them as sinners: in

the one case it is the gift which is meant, in the other the ethical habit. The child of God in ver. 1 can sin, just as the field sown with corn can bear weeds; the child of God in ver. 9 cannot sin, for he is by the imparted σπέρμα determined consciously and mightily against it.

If we now examine carefully what the Christian life really is, we shall not find in it a series of distinct and opposite elements, one half of which belong to the kingdom of light, and the other half to the kingdom of darkness. Rather, if we closely watch these particular elements and analyse them, the result will be found, that in every one of them the powers of light *and* the powers of darkness carry on their work in the man, so that there is no moment in the Christian's life when he is purely ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, as also by parity no moment when he is purely ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου. It may seem hard to reconcile with such a view the energetic way in which St. John in this section lays down the antithesis or the alternative *aut ... aut*. But this alternative is a necessary consequence of the position he assumes in speaking; it is that of the final judgment. The question has been ruled by ch. ii. 28 as that of the last παῤῥησία in the great day. But then it is plain that no man can be saved on the ground of a mere work of God wrought upon him; if salvation cannot be reached through an *opus operatum* OF man, neither can it any more be reached through an *opus operatum* ON man. God can never reckon that man blessed who has not in himself the conditions of blessedness. Further, it is certain that no admixture of good and evil can enter into the inheritance of heaven; that God will apply to human destiny and character not a relative but an absolute standard. Thus he who shall stand in the judgment must be absolutely righteous. The question in the great day will not be concerning a gift imparted by God to man (as in ch. iii. 1), not concerning a power or principle infused into him, but concerning what he has made of the power he received,—that is, in fact, concerning his works. Hence it is the pervasive biblical doctrine, especially that of the New Testament, and emphatically that of St. Paul, that man will be judged according to his

works; comp. Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 18; Gal. vi. 7; Rev. ii. 23, xx. 12, xxii. 12. As in the case of the owner of the field already mentioned, God beholds His children below, and regards them as such, in the hope and in the expectation and to the intent that the germ infused into us will prove itself fruitful. The idea of a *υἱοθεσία* in hope suggests that it is only a limited sphere of privilege which points beyond itself. The limit of it is the judgment, and of this the apostle treats. Wilt thou know how thou standest towards thy God, apply to thyself the standard which God will apply in the judgment, the standard of perfected righteousness. St. John gives us that in the words: *ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν.* However terrible the proposition sounds, it approves itself mighty and wholesome in its effects. He who admits that we have not to fight with flesh and blood, but with the kingdom of darkness, must needs also admit that every deed of darkness bears witness to our standing yet in some relation to that kingdom, and that we are not entirely withdrawn from it. Thus judging ourselves according to the test, the absolute test, of the divine judgment, we shall not, as sinning every day, be able to refrain from confessing that we are yet *ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου*, that the kingdom of darkness is still mighty within us. The deed of darkness makes us manifest as children of darkness. We have, so long as we abide on earth, the gift of sonship in an altogether stedfast manner; but that will not be the main test at the day of judgment. It will be asked then how we appropriated the gift and used it. Thus, therefore, the question is with the apostle not as to whether and in what way, at any particular moment of our earthly development, light and darkness are intermingled in the Christian; he only expresses the truth that in the day of awards he will not stand who still in any measure sins; and that we shall have no title then to regard ourselves as *τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ* in the ethical sense. Although these thoughts, in the form we give them, do not govern the ordinary Christian consciousness, they nevertheless find in ordinary Christian experience their justification. It is an experienced fact that the most

advanced Christians cry to God with a full heart, "Turn Thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned!" They regard themselves, on the evidence of a series of concurring elements, as still not entirely converted. But what other is this than the consciousness that, tested by the true standard of God's final judgment, they are not yet withdrawn from the *ἐξουσία τοῦ σκότους*.

The difficulties of the section, however, are not in this way altogether solved. If we are thus rigorous in impressing our minds, when sin occurs, with the fact that every such sin manifests us to be *τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου*, then that *παῤῥησία* which it was the apostle's aim to mature seems altogether cut off and buried out of sight. The *χαρὰ τετελειωμένη* promised in the Epistle is exchanged for an ever-renewed and ever-enduring *φόβος*. For though the experience, constantly confirmed, that we are still *ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου* may urge us to a more full surrender to the Holy Ghost, that the union between Him and our own I may become a perfected reality, yet we know, on the other hand, that down to the end of life we must needs go on sinning again. Now, if St. John infers from every sin that we have not yet seen and known the Lord, it certainly must seem that there is a stamp of unreality and self-deception impressed on any kind of surrender of the heart to the Lord from the very beginning. Thus may it not be said that all our believing and struggling, all our confidence and peace, are rendered doubtful in their very nature? How are we to understand—that is the question of habitual urgency—the appropriation of the divine gift, the perfect coincidence of our human condition and character with the Divine Spirit? First of all, it is certain that a self-surrender to the Lord, in connection with which we have consciously retained any sin, could be of no service to us; that would never inspire anything like *παῤῥησία*. Secondly, and conversely, it is equally true that if we actually have yielded up to the Lord the whole sum of our being, and surrendered ourselves absolutely to the illuminating influence of the *φῶς ἀληθινόν*, either all sin must cease, or, supposing it to reappear, it would subject us to

the doom of Heb. vi. Between these two hypotheses—a dedication, consciously not entire, to the sanctifying Spirit, and a dedication consciously perfect—there is a third conceivable. We may possess, that is, the will to surrender ourselves, with all that we have and are, to the Lord; but yet, in an unconscious manner, as it is now said, the dedication may be imperfect: either as to its extent, so far as sinful parts remain which have either not at all or not rightly been revealed to us as darkness, and therefore have not yet been brought under the searching influence of the light; or as to its intensity—and this is psychologically more exact—so far as our devotion has not reached its full consummation in the perfect energy of the spirit, in the absolutely decisive and influencing power of the will. In such a case the word would hold good of us: "she hath done what she could." Consecration to the Lord would not indeed be absolutely, but yet relatively, perfect: according, that is, to the measure of our knowledge and the strength of our will. So far, then, as this consecration appears to me perfect, and is perfect in the sense just indicated, there may be a *παῤῥησία* at the moment of this consciousness: I am assured that at this moment the light has the victory over the darkness. But if, in the course of further development, sin nevertheless manifests itself, this gives me to see that the last act of consecration to the Lord was, after all, not a complete one, and thus that, in the light of the absolute standard of the judgment, I do not stand as a *τέκνον τοῦ Θεοῦ*. This experience, then, evermore urges us, with respect to the past, to admit the force of the apostle's word, *οὐκ ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν*, but only to aim at it all the more diligently. The consequence of this view is obvious, that in the moment of death every man must have come or must come to this perfect devotion, or he cannot stand in the judgment.

It hardly needs to be added, that this exposition of the section does not make it in the most distant way support the merit of good works. These come into view only as confirmation of the *εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*. But most assuredly they are in the apostle's meaning the test, the standard of

self-knowledge, by which we are to measure our relation to God. It cannot be made too emphatic that it is St. John himself, who impresses us always with the predominant inwardness of his spiritual nature, who founds the assurance of sonship on something more than any feeling or consciousness. He leaves the decision to the simple practical question as to the indwelling of sin. When the decision is against us, we are rescued from despair by the needful testimony, given in ch. ii. 1, 2, to Him who is the *ἱλασμὸς περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν*. To make the works the means of knowing our spiritual state is not Johannaean only, it is Pauline also. We may compare 2 Tim. ii. 19, according to which the firm foundation of God, that is, the Christian church, has for its seal or testing token: *ἔγνω ὁ κύριος τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα Χριστοῦ*. Of these two elements, however, only one falls into the domain of experience, and that is the second: this is therefore the norm or standard of our judgment of ourselves; the former is the source of our consolation.

As soon as we view the words of St. John from the point to which they themselves conduct us, all difficulty disappears. *Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν*: this is and must ever be an ideal for us; but it is at the same time the actual requirement, in the presence and by the application of which we can ascertain our position before God.

Verse 10*b*.

Πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

As early as the introduction of his Epistle the apostle announced its twofold aim: to confirm, on the one hand, fellowship with the brethren, and, on the other, fellowship with God. The first part of the document is constructed on this principle of division; and the one we are now examining is similarly divided into two halves. The first and second chapters had treated generally of the *κοινωνία τοῦ φωτός*; the apostle has proceeded in this to the con-

firmation of the fellowship which produces παῤῥησία. This confirmation takes place, on the one hand, through the works which are referred to God, that is, through the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην: this has been discussed in the section just ended, vers. 4–10*a*. It takes place, on the other hand, through the works which approve brotherly love: these are discoursed of in vers. 10*b*–18. That in a certain way brotherly love also belongs to the obedience to the divine commandments, and thus penetrates into the first section, the apostle had recognised in the second chapter, and it will be seen also in what follows. But it is also self-evident that the commandments of the second table have a relative independence by the side of those of the first. Looking at it from this point of view, St. John connects brotherly love with the exhortations to δικαιοσύνη by means of a καί, which makes it a second and co-ordinate exhortation.

But who are the brethren thus to be loved? Are they the other members of the Christian fellowship, or men generally? When we consider that Cain and Abel are adduced as an exemplary warning, who were nevertheless only connected by physical consanguinity, and not by similarity of relation to God; when we find that the unrighteousness of hard dealing with those who are in bodily need is the subject; when the opposition to brotherly love is stated to be, not that the children of the world hate one another, but that the world hates *us;* when the example of Christ is urged, who, however, died for us when we were yet sinners: all these considerations might induce us to interpret the ἀδελφοί as meaning all men at large. But, on the other hand, the exhortation ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους can only refer to the Christian fellowship; for a mutual love between Christians and the world is, according to ver. 13, impossible, since the world *must* hate us. Moreover, the entire discussion of the apostle concerning love and hatred looks back to the final discourses of the Lord in the Gospel, and these refer exclusively to the relation of the apostles to each other. The arguments on both sides can have justice done to them only when we recognise that St. John does

not absolutely exclude love to all men, and that he by no means limits with any care his requirements to the relations of Christians to each other; while, on the other hand, he reflects primarily and expressly only upon these, since the mutual conduct of the brethren lay at the moment nearest his heart. The world comes into view in the present Epistle, not so much as the field of Christian labour, or as a power to be vanquished and Christianized: it is rather the negative pole to the kingdom of God. The former view the apostle does not aim to deny; but he does not bring it directly into notice.

Verse 11.

Ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους.

The declaration, that he who loveth not his brother is not of God (ver. 10*b*), is established by the fact that the church had received the commandment of brotherly love *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*. A commandment which had been impressed among the first fundamental ideas of Christianity, which had further been enforced ever anew (*ἀπό*), must assume a central position, and be decisive concerning the *εἶναι ἐκ Θεοῦ*. The words obviously point back to ch. ii. 7, where the *ἀκούειν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* is in a similar way referred to brotherly love. The same reasons in this passage and in that make it impossible to refer the *ἀρχή* to the Old Testament economy; in both the beginning of the Christian estate of the church is intended. The matter of the announcement here before us—for *ἀγγελία*, not *ἐπαγγελία*, is the approved reading—is at the same time its end and purpose: that the matter is brotherly love is testified by the *αὕτη*; that it is the purpose *ἵνα* declares. Though these two distinct ideas, thus indicated by the *αὕτη* and the *ἵνα*, and as it were blended together, did not present themselves as sharply defined to the first readers, yet it is to be observed that both language and the truth it delivers often mean more than either speaker or hearer is conscious of; and the expositor—especially of the poets in classical literature, and more especially still in sacred literature—has a right

to take into account the full scope of the words, unless, indeed, the meaning of the whole shows that part of this scope is rendered impossible.

VERSE 12.

Οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν, καὶ ἔσφαξε τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ. Καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.

As to the detail, the apostle orders his exhortation to the exhibition of brotherly love in this way: in vers. 12–15 he warns against hatred as the ungodly principle, which is the token of death; and in vers. 16–18 exhorts positively to active love. The example of Cain, adduced to affright us in ver. 12, might seem at the first glance fitted to support that reference of *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* to the Old Testament which we have denied to exist here: "in the very first pages of the Bible the deterring example of Cain preaches the duty of brotherly love." But *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἀκούειν* is, after all, something different from *ἀκούειν ἃ ἐν ἀρχῇ γέγονεν*; and while the deed of Cain showed the horror of hatred, that is something different from the *ἀγγελία, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους*. As to the construction of the sentence, it is not enough for the explanation of the words *καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν* to assume a simple ellipsis, and therefore to supply *ὦμεν*; for that would leave the *οὐ* to be accounted for, as *μή* ought then to have been found instead of *οὐ*. It is obvious that this is a case of simple attraction. The thought present to the apostle's mind was obviously this: *μὴ ὦμεν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν*. First of all, the point of comparison, the *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ εἶναι*, is only once uttered, and that as a subordinate clause; and then the negative, which belonged to the cohortative sentence generally (*μή*), is by attraction drawn to the subordinate clause, which is merely declaratory, and thus, instead of the subjective negation, the objective (*οὐ*) appears. The apostle's thought was—to make the grammatical point clearer by an example—in its form similar to that of 1 Cor. x. 8, *μὴ πορνεύωμεν καθώς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν*: which was under the apostle's pen

so changed as if in the cited passage it stood *οὐ καθάς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν.*

In ver. 10 it had been declared that brotherly love was a sign of divine sonship; and, conversely, that the absence of it was a proof that regeneration was wanting. Hence the apostle's exhortation is directed in the first place, not against the *σφάζειν*, which was only evidence of the *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, but against this latter itself, and subordinately against its evidence in murder. The part of the Epistle now before us does not, indeed, refer to works in themselves, but to these as the marks and signs of the internal condition. The second half of this verse shows the internal connection between the relation to the brethren, of which the apostle will now speak, and the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, —that is, the relation to God of which he had already just spoken. The former, that is, depends upon the latter: because Cain's works, the collective expression of his inner man, were not righteous like those of his brother, therefore there arose in him hatred to that brother. *Ποιεῖν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν* and *οὐκ ἀγαπᾶν τὸν ἀδελφόν* are not simply co-ordinate evidences of the *εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, as the *καί* in ver. 10*b* declared this co-ordination; but the latter is, on the other hand, the plain result of the former. That the unrighteousness of Cain is here exhibited as the ground of his hatred to his brother, is altogether in harmony with the Old Testament record. For there we see that the motive of his hatred to Abel was his envy, because Abel was more acceptable to God; but this latter was founded, according to the express divine declaration, in the הֵיטִיב, the "good work" of Abel, which was wanting to Cain. It is extremely appropriate that St. John does not speak of the *μισεῖν* of Cain, but of the *σφάζειν* in which that hatred found expression; for he is treating generally of the outward evidence of the internal disposition, through which outward evidence the internal disposition appears manifestly and incontrovertibly to the man himself; and that he uses the word *σφάζειν*, which occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in the Apocalypse, and there used, so to speak, as a *vox solemnis*, with a special fulness of meaning, was

designed to exhibit before the reader's eyes the unmitigated fearfulness of the act of Cain. But St. John does not present the fratricide of Cain only as one individual result of the general unrighteousness of his works, but rather as specifically evoked by the opposite character of the works of Abel. As everywhere, so here also evil is brought to its full maturity by means of juxtaposition with the light, which reveals its character and makes it truly dark. The wicked man who feels himself miserable at heart grudges the good man the blessedness he has in his righteousness; and therefore has the disposition to rob him of it by annihilating the good himself. As it is in the nature of the devil, so it is in the nature of the child of the devil; they are alike *ἀνθρωποκτόνοι*. And the mention here of envy as the cause of the murder accords with the record of Genesis: Cain was urged to his sinful act by knowing that his offering was not acceptable to God, while his brother's was acceptable.

VERSES 13–15.

Μὴ θαυμάζετε, ἀδελφοί μου, εἰ μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος. Ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωήν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ. Πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστί· καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.

The following verses certainly make an application of this scriptural example to the relation between Christians and the world. There is still a Cain on a large scale, which is the world; and there is an Abel, which is the Christian church. What wonder is it if the same relations are sustained which we see in the primitive times between the two brothers! But what direction does the teaching of the apostle seem to take, when carefully examined? Does he aim really to show that the world corresponds to Cain, and we to Abel,—that is, will he assure us that the hatred of the world as being evil is naturally excited against us as being good? The form which the writer has given to his present thought does not accord with this. In such

a case he must evidently have thrown the accent upon the fact that the world hates *us*, and assigned as the obvious reason of it that we were good and the world evil. But it is not so ordered: he speaks only of the loving and hating of *brethren*; an expression which does not point to the great difference in character between the parties as an explanation of the hatred, but, on the contrary, shows how unnatural the feeling is as between persons of the same nature. And were that other order of thought the right one, the conclusion would have been drawn from the character as a whole to the consequent hatred or love; while the apostle conversely concludes from the existence of hatred or love what is the ethical character as a whole. All this leads us to another analysis of the three verses before us.

The apostle does not mean to indicate how natural it is (*μὴ θαυμάζετε*) that the world hates *us*, but that the *world* hates: the stress is not on the object hated, but on the subject hating. This is evident, first, from the emphasis laid on the *ἡμεῖς* of ver. 14, as over against the *κόσμος* of ver. 13; and it is confirmed by the marked position of the *κόσμος* at the end of the sentence. It is natural for the *world* to hate,—the apostle proceeds,—for hatred is simply a sign of the death into which the world, according to the true idea of the world, has fallen; while the Christian must love, because he, by his very nature, belongs to the life. Thus the section does not by any means contain consolation as to the world's hatred which falls upon Christians, but is simply a dehortation from hatred: the world, and only the world, can hate; there is nothing strange in its hating; and this makes it clear that the Christian cannot and may not hate. In ver. 13 the object of the hatred is added (*ὑμᾶς*), not because the following observations have reference to this, but simply in remembrance of the preceding comparison between Cain and Abel; the progress of the thought does not rest upon this, that the world hates *us*, but that *the world* hates. That hatred is characteristic of the world, the apostle dilates upon in two ways; first, by showing that the token of divine life is love, the very opposite of hatred

(ver. 14*a*); secondly, by dwelling on the fact that hatred infallibly springs from death (vers. 14*b*, 15). The conclusion, that thus it is only the world that can hate, is not expressly repeated. The emphasized ἡμεῖς in ver. 14 accordingly contrasts Christians with the world; but it does not refer only to the οἴδαμεν, as if the meaning were: "*we* indeed know that we belong to the kingdom of life, but the world does not know it:" the antithesis is found between the nature of Christians defined in the verse and that of the world. "We Christians are partakers of life, and know it by this, that we have brotherly love; the world hateth, and thereby gives evidence that it belongs to death." This part of the Epistle we now consider deals, as a whole, with the signs of sonship; and as such brotherly love is here introduced.

It is not, however, that we know ourselves to be children of God, but that we have *become* such, that we have passed from death unto life; for every Christian has the consciousness that by nature he also belonged to the world, and was withdrawn from it only through a μετανοεῖν. That in the second hemistich the apostle does not say, as a formal parallel, "the *world* abides in death, because it does not love (*causa cognitionis*)," but constructs the clause generally, "*He that* loveth not, abideth in death," has its reason in this, that he is not really thinking of the world, but refers his dehortation to Christians alone. All who hate, be they who they may, and ye also, therefore, if in this ye are conformed to the world, are fallen under the power of death. That this is the case the apostle makes still more emphatic, when in ver. 15 he makes hatred equivalent to murder, which manifestly and obviously pertains to death. But this is not meant to prove that the hater is essentially a murderer, that, as the common exposition runs, hatred is the germ of murder; for, while it would follow from this that the murderer must have been a hater, the converse would not follow, that every hater is already a murderer; and yet this was to be proved. Rather the congruence between the two lies in this, that in hatred there is no element wanting which is contained in murder, that the

animating thoughts of the hater and the murderer are the same. In both, the existence of the brother is opposed to me, and I seek to take it away: inwardly in hatred, denying him existence in my thoughts; in murder outwardly, seeking to remove him out of the world of the living. As the thought not uttered aloud does not essentially differ from the thought spoken out, no more does hatred differ from murder. If it does not lead to murder, that may be due to accidental circumstances, not inherent in the hatred itself, that hinder; and then there is no difference between it and murder in the moral estimate. Or it may be that I hate another not enough to murder him; and in that case hate is not present in the full comprehensiveness and maturity of its idea. But a murderer, the apostle goes on to say, hath not eternal life abiding in him; and by the οἴδατε declares that to be a fact which needs no demonstration. Here it is primarily obvious in this passage that ζωὴ αἰώνιος has in it no thought of time, but is altogether an ethical idea or characteristic: for, if we would take it in the sense of ζωὴ ἀκατάλυτος, it is clear that an οὐ μένειν of the ζωὴ ἀκατάλυτος would be a *contradictio in adjecto.* And the expression οὐ μένειν leads us to infer that the apostle is really addressing his inference to the readers themselves as a dehortation, and not speaking objectively concerning the world; for they alone have as yet received a portion in this life, and it is they alone who could undervalue and lose this prerogative. That the murderer is under the power of death, is placed in a clear light by the consistency between his nature and his act: he who would deliver others to death is himself in the power of a much more fearful death; what he purposes for others affects himself in a much higher degree. As God can give nothing but life, because He is Himself life, so he who is under the power of death can effect only death. Thus has the apostle, not only by the example of Cain, but also by dialectical argument, shown that hatred is a token of being bound in death, that therefore only the world can hate; and thus he has in the most urgent way warned his readers against hatred. And here we have another instance of the

double-sidedness of treatment which abounds in this Epistle: on the one hand, the warning against hatred, and, on the other, the presupposition (ver. 14*a*) that the church does not need such a warning, being conscious of being actuated by love.

VERSE 16.

Ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκε· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς τιθέναι.

To the negative view, the dehortation from hatred, the apostle appends as an antithesis the positive (vers. 16–18), love as shown in act and not merely in sentiment. As he has sharply exhibited hatred of the brother in the example which proclaimed first in the history of man and in the most fearful manner its type, so that in him and in his acts we may learn what hatred really is; so now in the verses before us he places Him in contrast who furnishes the supreme and perfect type of what love is, that we may learn it from Him—Jesus Christ. But as the apostle is writing to Christians, who, according to ver. 14, *ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν μεταβεβήκασιν*, their learning of Christ is supposed to have already taken place, *ἐγνώκαμεν*. The counterpart or opposite of Cain, which the Lord presents, is as perfect as can be conceived by the mind. Cain's hatred consisted in this, that he sacrificed his brother's life for his own advantage; and in this consisted, by contrast, the love of Christ, that He sacrificed His own life for our good. *Τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκε*: a unique expression, found in Greek literature only in St. John. We meet with it in the Gospel, and often especially in the tenth chapter (vers. 12, 15, 17, 18), as also in ch. xiii. 37, 38, xv. 13; and we have it here. That it occurs first in the discourses of our Lord Himself, which are pervaded by Old Testament references, must suggest a derivation from the Old Testament; which, indeed, is otherwise much more probable than the explanation that makes it an application of profane Greek, such as *θέσθαι ἀσπίδας*, and so forth. The Hebrew at once presents the verb שִׂים, which

in so many ways responds to the τιθέναι. More specifically we have then, on the one hand, the phrase שִׂים נֶפֶשׁ בְּכַפּוֹ, and on the other, a suggestion of Isa. liii. 10, תָּשִׂים נַפְשׁוֹ אָשָׁם. The former of these applications signifies not so much the surrender of life as the staking it, and therefore expresses no more than the readiness to surrender life; whether that life be lost or not, is in the first place irrelevant. In the passage of Isaiah the case is otherwise. For if in this place, as we think, תָּשִׂים is in the third person, and נַפְשׁוֹ the subject preceding, then we must translate: when the soul (*sc.* of the servant of Jehovah) pledges compensation. Wherein the compensation consists is not contained in the words; for we must not give the verb a reflexive aspect, and translate: "when his soul shall pledge itself for compensation." But what is not justified as translation is nevertheless true of the matter itself: the sacrifice of restitution consists essentially in the life of Him who pays it down, that is, in the life of the Messiah. But the chief thing is here to take the verb שִׂים in both the phrases not in the sense of "laying down," but in that of "pledging," gauging His life for something. But this interpretation is not merely possible here; it is the only one which harmonizes with the connection, as will presently be shown. Nothing is here said of that *satisfactio vicaria* of which the passage in Isaiah speaks; for then we should have read, τὴν ψυχὴν τιθέναι ἀντὶ ἡμῶν, whereas the ὑπέρ only indicates that the interposition of the life of Christ was for our advantage: every more exact determination of it the apostle leaves untouched. In this act of Christ we have learned to know τὴν ἀγάπην,—that is, not His love, but love generally, what it means to love. And, in fact, there can be no more profound conception of love than that which is contained in the words τιθέναι τὴν ψυχήν. Every deed of love is a staking of the ψυχή: I cannot discharge the slightest office of charity to any one without in some degree denying myself, my own I. As the denying of the personality of the brother on my own account is the essence of all hatred, so the denying of my own I for the brother's sake is the essence of all love.

And as the apostle already in ch. ii. 7, and that with special reference to love, had declared that *καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησε καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν οὕτως περιπατεῖν*, so here also the same requirement is urged with specific reference to the demonstrations of love: as the mind of the Redeemer's love found expression in the *τιθέναι τὴν ψυχήν*, so it is our obligation (*ὀφείλομεν*) to copy this expression of love in our own life.

VERSE 17.

Ὃς δ' ἂν ἔχῃ τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρείαν ἔχοντα, καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;

With this requirement, that we lay down in this sense our life, is associated the antithetical observation (δέ), how it is with him who does not act thus: it is most natural—as the rhetorical question really says—that there can be no relation to God in that case. If I give not *τὸν βίον*, what I possess for the need and nourishment of bodily life, that signifies no other than that I will not myself lay down my life in the very least, in the most external circumference of it, for the advantage of my brother. The apostle says *βίος τοῦ κόσμου*, in order by this appendage to make prominent the triviality of the matter: if ye do not in this which is least evince your love, how will ye do it in that which is greater? Such a man as St. Paul would surrender the very highest thing, his fellowship with Christ, for the brethren (Rom. ix. 3); and will ye not surrender the least important of all things? And it is yet more base, since ye must absolutely shut your heart against sympathy (*κλείειν*), and suppress the most natural impulses, natural even in the world.[1] The entire unnaturalness of such hardheartedness appears in all its prominence in the *θεωρεῖν τὸν ἀδελφὸν χρείαν ἔχοντα*: his need is supposed to be well known to me, my eye rests upon it, my thoughts are concerned with it, sympathy urges its claims; but yet

[1] *Ἀποκλείειν τινός* is a phrase well known in classical Greek; but *κλείειν ἀπὸ τινός* seems, on the other hand, formed simply after the type of the Hebrew סָגַר מִפְּנֵי.

I bolt the doors of my heart. We need not here assume, any more than in the case mentioned by Jas. ii. 15 seq., that such lovelessness had occurred in a marked and express manner among the disciples; it is everywhere so common that we may understand the exhortation without any more especial occasion for it. But if the unnaturalness of the behaviour thus rebuked is so great, its deviation from the required *τιθέναι τὴν ψυχήν* so wide, it is clear how little consistent it must be with any near relation to God.

St. John has from the beginning of his discussion of the subject exhibited brotherly love as the test of *εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, and therefore as its result; if this love be absent, the being born of God must be absent too. As in the negative section, vers. 12–15, brotherly love was considered to be the reflection of our relation to God, not of the relation of God to us; so also here the *ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ* is not God's love to us, but our love to Him. We might indeed here, as in ch. ii. 5, take the *ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ* quite generally to be love, as it is in God and will have its reflection in us, and therefore as a unity which contains reference to both its directions; but since in what precedes the specific love of Christ to us had been spoken of, the other view just presented is the more appropriate. The *μένειν* is here to be explained as in vers. 14 and 15: since the apostle is writing to Christians, he obviously presupposes the right sentiment of the heart; but through hardness against brethren that must needs be lost. For the rest, our verse plainly enough shows that the profound speculation of St. John is laid at the service of the most immediate practical requirements of Christianity: there is here and nowhere a gulf between them.

Verse 18.

Τεκνία μου, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ τῇ γλώσσῃ, ἀλλ' ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ.

The men here spoken of have no sort of love whatever. But it is not necessary that this lack of love should exhibit itself in words. We may present the semblance of love

by words, while remaining absolutely without it in deeds. Hence follows the exhortation to avoid such hypocritical semblance of charity. But as this is about to close the section, and the apostle purposes here to sum up the whole in one clause, he turns his address in affectionate earnestness to the hearts of his readers. The words λόγῳ μηδὲ τῇ γλώσσῃ, with which we should not love, derive their explanation from the antithesis ἐν ἔργῳ, καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. To the λόγος the ἔργον is opposed. The word of love to which the λόγος refers may be meant sincerely, inspired by warm feeling, but be wanting in readiness for sacrifice; we may wish the best to the brethren, but not procure it for them by the proper τιθέναι τὴν ψυχήν. The Christians represented in Jas. ii. 16 were such ἀγαπῶντες ἐν λόγῳ. Opposed to this is the ἀγαπᾶν ἐν ἔργῳ. The ἐν must be noted as the opposite of the lack of it in λόγῳ. The apostle certainly could not have written μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε ἐν λόγῳ, for this would have meant that we should not love in words, which is obviously not his meaning; but we are not to love ἐν λόγῳ, in the sense that the word is made the representative, instrument, and only herald or spokesman of our love. We then come to the second pair of the four expressions: μὴ τῇ γλώσσῃ ἀλλ' ἀληθείᾳ (the ἐν is to be supplemented before ἀληθείᾳ). To the truth, the inward actuality of love, stands opposed the γλῶσσα, the mere outward babbling about it. In the first member of the sentence we are exhorted against a love which approves itself only by good, sincere, and well-intentioned wishes; here, against hollow phrases as such. That λόγος might come from a sympathizing soul, without, however, energy enough in its fellow-feeling; but in the other case mere phrases disguise the utter absence of all true sympathy.

The apostle has thus, in contrast with the hatred which reigns in the world, not merely demanded of Christians love in general, but that love which the Lord Himself has taught; it must be self-sacrificing (ver. 16); this self-sacrifice must approve itself in the outward relations of life (ver. 17); and that not in deceptive words, but in deed and in truth (ver. 18).

Verses 19, 20.

Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν. καὶ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν, καὶ γινώσκει πάντα.

There is certainly in the following words an advance in the thought: this is clear on the first glance. But wherein the progress consists, and how these verses are therefore related to what goes before, cannot be decided at the outset. Expositors are so divided as not to know whether the passage refers to forgiveness or condemnation, whether brotherly love or *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* is the subject; and this division shows the importance of considering the expressions in detail before we can gain even a preliminary point of view whence to understand the whole connection.

First of all we must settle the readings, which itself will be a great gain for the exposition. The *καί* beginning ver. 19 is indeed wanting in many influential manuscripts, especially A and B; but it is otherwise extremely well attested. The decision as to its genuineness would be really important only if on it depended the answer to the question whether ver. 19 introduces an altogether new thought, or is connected with what precedes. But the *καί* has no such critical weight as this: certainly ver. 19 does spring from the preceding words, as *ἐν τούτῳ* in the beginning shows, which must necessarily be referred to them. For otherwise, if *ἐν τούτῳ* is to be referred to the following *ὅτι*, the condensed statement would be simply, we may know our *εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* by this, that God is greater than our heart. But it is plain that the proposition taken in this general way proves too much, and therefore nothing. Laid down thus, and without any cautionary guards, it might be used to demonstrate that even the *υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας* is of the truth. But if the substance of the *ἐν τούτῳ* is what precedes, and the connection of our verse with the foregoing is held fast, then it is a matter quite irrelevant whether the *καί* is or is not read in the beginning of the verse. Similarly, it is of little moment whether we

read γινώσκομεν or γνωσόμεθα. As to the internal grounds, the genuineness of the present tense may be argued from the probability that copyists, having before them the future immediately following, πείσομεν, which is co-ordinated with the γινώσκομεν, would be likely to change this latter also into a future through mere *lapsus memoriae;* while, on the other hand, that the future γνωσόμεθα was the original reading, might be argued from the fact that the phrase or turn ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν is so current with St. John that the transcribers would naturally choose to write it. If internal reasons are to decide, we must judge by the strength of the evidence as it appears to us; and the future seems more likely to have been the primitive reading. The two futures, γνωσόμεθα and πείσομεν, are then to be explained, not so much from the cohortative tone of the section ("we should know," and so on), but in their strictly logical sense, as deduction from the conditions laid down by the apostle to be at once explained: "under these suppositions shall we, as a necessary result, know." Finally, it is of no importance whether at the end of ver. 19 καρδίας or καρδίαν is to be read, but the former is to be preferred. On the other hand, everything depends on our striking out, or otherwise, the second ὅτι in ver. 20, that before μείζων. But it happens that here we have good grounds, both external and internal, for decision. While the external testimonies are in favour of keeping it, we can much more easily understand that the transcribers, taking it as purely epanaleptic, left it out, than that they inserted it where it was not, since its insertion has greatly embarrassed the passage.

Let us now proceed to the exposition itself. After what has been discussed we may assume that ἐν τούτῳ looks back to what has just preceded, and there its meaning is plain enough: it is the true and inward brotherly love to which it refers as the ground of the γινώσκειν. We have perceived that the design of the whole section from ch. ii. 28 onwards has been to exhibit the demonstration of divine sonship in work as its sure criterion. First, there was a requirement of ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην as it respects

God; then it was shown that the lack of this gives birth to hatred towards brethren; and conversely, that love to brethren gives sufficient evidence of the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* as a character. Consequently the inference is a sound one, that true brotherly love, as demanded in ver. 18, gives assured evidence (*ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν*) of the right relation to God. Here, however, this is not, as before, described as *εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, but as *εἶναι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας*. Primarily, we may suppose, because so much prominence had just been given to truth and semblance. We must love *ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*, and only when we do this are we *ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας*. But, further, this expression probably was intended to indicate that only in virtue of the consciousness that we are of the truth can we have tranquillity in thinking of the divine judgment. He who is Himself the truth must acknowledge those as His who by genuine brotherly love approve themselves as *ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ὄντες*. This position of confident assurance as in regard to God, the apostle expresses by the words, *ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν*.

There is a controversy about the meaning of the *πείθειν*. If we translate it "persuade to something," it may be asked what it is that we persuade our hearts to accept. The omission of the object itself would not be so strange; but in the present connection nothing has been spoken of to which we might be supposed to persuade our hearts; for the brotherly love which had been the matter of discourse is taken for granted in our verse (*ἐν τούτῳ*), and we have no need to persuade ourselves of that. Moreover, it is not to be denied that "to persuade our heart to anything" is very artificial; it would come to this in the end, that we are supposed to form some purpose: but it is obvious that it would be extremely forced to describe that by *πείθειν τὴν καρδίαν*. Besides this one, there are two other significations of *πείθειν* which are suggested: "convince" and "soothe." Now here again we have, in respect to the former of these, the same difficulty of finding an object concerning which we are thought to convince ourselves. The most obvious course would then be to take the clause *ὅτι*

μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν as this object. And the preliminary inquiry must be the reference and meaning of the second ὅτι in ver. 20, which must be decided before we can decide the other point.

This may be understood as either a causal particle (because) or as defining the object (that). Let us begin with the second of these possibilities. In that case the ὅτι would introduce the objective matter of the πείθειν; and it would be declared concerning what we τὴν καρδίαν πείσομεν. Now, if we take πείσομεν with the meaning "convince," we must translate: "we shall convince our heart of this, that God is greater than our heart." But then it must not be forgotten that the proposition μείζων ὁ Θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν is so clear in itself, that there could be no necessity of our being in any manner persuaded of it. It might indeed be used as a premiss from which a conclusion should be drawn; but certainly not as a thesis which itself needed to be demonstrated. But, that being the case, on what principle should we here have to be convinced of it? Is it that the apostle looks back on the ἐν τούτῳ, so that in the consciousness of brotherly love we are supposed to penetrate to this assurance of God's greatness? But what in all the world has brotherly love to do with the divine greatness and our conviction of it? Thus this translation is altogether untenable.

Now let us try the second possible interpretation, and take ὅτι as defining the object; but taking πείθειν in the sense of "soothing or allaying." Then the meaning would be: "we shall encourage our heart as to the fact that God is greater than it." It is clear that in this case μείζων refers to the greater severity of God; for, in relation to His greater mildness, we should not need any special solace. But then again it would be incomprehensible how this soothing should take effect: however conscious of brotherly love we might be, the simple thought of the greater severity of God must needs make every such solace impossible. To this must be added that, even if we admit the meaning of soothe or solace to be right generally (of which hereafter), yet πείθειν with this meaning is always used absolutely,

never with ὅτι following it; that at least "comfort *concerning*" must be expressed. Thus it is perfectly impossible to understand the clause with ὅτι as objective; and we are forced to revert to the causal meaning of the ὅτι. But then it becomes impossible to translate πείθειν as convincing of something. For if, as we have shown, we do not find the object of the πείθειν in the clause with ὅτι μείζων, there is generally none to be found. Yet some such objective is peremptorily necessary if we take the meaning "to persuade or convince:" we must be convinced of something.

The question then arises, whether πείθειν may not have a meaning which will allow its being without a substantial object after it. Such a meaning would be the "soothing" already mentioned, if only it can be defended on other grounds. Classical Greek is supposed to furnish many instances in its favour; but in most of the cases (especially those out of the *Iliad*, i. 100, ix. 112, 181, 386) this signification is at least not obligatory, since the connection allows us to translate "persuade," the object of the persuasion being invariably supplied in the context. On the other hand, the passage *cited* in Plato, *de Rep.* iii. 390, probably Hesiodic, seems to us to establish the meaning of "soothe:" δῶρα θεοὺς πείθει, δῶρ' αἰδοίους βασιλῆας. As it concerns the New Testament, Acts xii. 20 and xiv. 19 do not belong to this subject, as in these passages the object of the "persuading" is easily supplied. It is otherwise with Matt. xxviii. 14, where the members of the council bribe the watchers of the sepulchre, and promise them that, if Pilate should hear of it, πείσομεν αὐτόν. To supply here ἀκολάστους ὑμᾶς ἐάν is venturesome, on the one hand; and, on the other, this thought needed not to be expressed, since it was already prominent enough in the ἀμερίμνους ὑμᾶς ποιήσομεν. Rather we must assume that the high priests aimed at accomplishing two things: first, they would soften Pilate's displeasure on account of the supposed sleep of the watchers at the sepulchre; and, secondly, they would thus deliver these watchers from suffering the penalty. But if once the meaning of a word is established by any confirmatory passage, as it is in the

present case by the quotation from Plato, and, less directly, by that from St. Matthew, then we are justified in adopting this meaning in other passages which, though they do not pressingly demand such an interpretation themselves, yet are most successfully interpreted when such a meaning is applied to them by their help. This is the case in our present passage, and we therefore translate πείθειν by propitiate or soothe. And this solacing of our hearts, the apostle says, will take place ἔμπροσθεν Θεοῦ: that is, when we place ourselves inwardly before God, and judge ourselves with His measure, in the consciousness of His holiness, so can we, even in the presence of this standard, take comfort.

But this soothing presupposes anxiety of heart: whence this comes, and in what it consists, is shown in the beginning of the following verse. That the second ὅτι is to be taken causatively commends itself at once; but the first one involves us in new difficulties. For this first ὅτι may itself be viewed in two ways: *either* it may be understood as equivalent to the second, so that this latter is only an epanalepsis or resumption of the former, and then the clause with ἐάν is a conditional clause; *or* the first ὅτι is to be written with the diastole (ὅ,τι), and understood relatively, and then ἐάν is only the particle ἄν which is so frequent in the New Testament. Against the first explanation, according to which the second ὅτι is an epanalepsis of the first, many very decisive arguments may be urged. For instance, the causal ὅτι (and we have shown that its clause, μείζων ὁ Θεὸς κ.τ.λ., is of this character) is never resumed or repeated in such a way as this; certainly such an unexampled epanalepsis is out of the question here, where only some words separate the first ὅτι from the second. And then, again, the conditional clause ἐὰν καταγινώσκῃ would in that case stand in a false logical position. For we should have to translate: "We can comfort our hearts, because God, in case our heart condemns us, is greater than our heart." The position of the conditional particle after ὅτι would make this meaning inevitable; the conditional clause would be dependent on the clause with ὅτι, and thus the greatness of God would appear to be condi-

tioned by the accusation of our heart. That would lead to the conclusion that, if our hearts did not condemn us, God would not be greater than they. But the only appropriate thought is obviously that, in case our hearts condemn us, we may console them,—that is, the conditional clause must not belong to the phrase ὅτι μείζων, but to πείσομεν.

Accordingly, as we cannot take the ὅτι opening ver. 20 as a causal particle, it only remains that we take it as a relative, and resolve ἐάν into the simple ἄν. Certainly the combination ὅστις ἐάν, ὅ,τι ἐάν is not frequent; indeed, it is very remarkable that it is not found uncontradicted in any passage of the New Testament. Yet the reading ὅ,τι ἐάν seems to us secure enough in Gal. v. 10 and Col. iii. 17, where the preponderant probability is in favour of retaining the ἐάν, though even the two other passages, Acts iii. 33, Col. iii. 18, must be struck out. The interpretation of the ὅτι ἐάν in this manner in our passage is not only demanded by the sense, but it is grammatically admissible; since καταγινώσκειν elsewhere occurs with the accusative, not to say that the pronoun even with such verbs as generally require other cases may stand in the accusative. Moreover, the generalizing ὅ,τι ἐάν, instead of the usual ὃ ἐάν, is here peculiarly appropriate; for it expresses the idea that in all instances in which our hearts may happen to condemn us, we may solace them. The two verses under consideration might therefore be thus translated: "Herein, by this love ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, rests our consciousness that we are of the truth; and hereby (the ἐν τούτῳ belongs also to πείσομεν) may we soothe our hearts, in all cases in which our heart condemns us (that here the singular καρδία enters is very refined: each heart has its own particular accusations, and the individual is in the apostle's view), for God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

After all this, we have only as yet busied ourselves about the mere vesture of St. John's thought: we have now to look at the very thought itself. Two things the apostle takes for granted: one, in the ἐν τούτῳ of ver. 19, that we have brotherly love; the other, in the clause ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκῃ κ.τ.λ., that in some measure our hearts reproach

us. According to the explanation given, we are supposed to have, in the consciousness of brotherly love, the means whereby we may allay the reproaches of our conscience. But this thought is, as it appears, quite an alien one to the Christian sentiment. The accusations of my heart certainly can have reference only to sins and the sinfulness of which I know myself to be a partaker: concerning that, am I supposed to take comfort simply in this way, and in this way alone? and if so, could that consolation lie in the possession of brotherly love? does not this lead to the most superficial and vapid Rationalism? The Apostle James says that he who keeps the whole law, and yet sins in one particular, is guilty of the whole law. Does not St. John here say the very opposite: if you only keep the commandment of brotherly love, you may leave all else behind you with confidence? Not in any work wrought by us, but in the blood of Christ or the grace of God we are accustomed to see the only genuine ground of our hearts' pacification. But it is God who comes primarily into view here; for the words *μείζων ὁ Θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν* can, according to the interpretation given above, be brought into consideration only as the ground that justifies our taking comfort to our hearts. Consequently the much-contested question, whether the *μείζων* refers to the condemning severity of God or His pardoning kindness, is made easy at the very outset: having become convinced that *πείθειν* must be understood in the sense of "soothe," and *ὅτι* with a causative signification, it is clear that the clause *ὅτι μείζων* must, as containing matter of consolation, exhibit not the greater strictness of God, but His greater tenderness.

For the sake, however, of the deep importance of the matter itself, and to become still more convinced of the soundness of our interpretation, let us look at the other way of taking the *μείζων ὁ Θεός*. Referring it to the greater severity of God, we must make the meaning of the verse this: *we* condemn ourselves, *God* will much more condemn us. There would then be found a contrast between the subject-ideas, God and we; but the predicate would apply to both, though it may be in a different degree: both

condemn. But such an antithesis as this is assuredly not supported by the arrangement of the words: the words ὁ Θεός and καρδία ἡμῶν have by no means any emphasis on them—rather come in among different ideas. Observing the καταγινώσκῃ, placed first in the subordinate clause, this might appear to be the strength of the antithesis; and then the condemnation would require to have a non-condemnation set over against it. Further, the view of ὅ,τι ἐάν as a relative, which we have established, would not so well harmonize with the end of the verse, γινώσκει πάντα, on any other principle of interpretation. For, that we *thereby* come to the persuasion that God is greater than our heart, in the matter of its condemnation, is not logically and strictly demonstrated by the proposition that God knoweth *all things*, but by the proposition that He more fully knows the thing in question. Of course it may be said against that, that this is naturally included in the γινώσκει πάντα; but there would be a certain inconcinnity, nevertheless. We therefore adhere to the conclusion that μείζων must be understood to exhibit the greater gentleness of God.

The gentleness of God is not regarded as absolutely and in all matters a valid ground of consolation; but it is such as based upon His omniscience (γινώσκει πάντα). Thus, if our conscience condemns us, we can find solace for ourselves only if we have made ourselves worse than we really are, or thought ourselves more entirely sundered from God than is actually the case,—than could indeed actually be the case, since God knows everything. Notwithstanding the accusations of our heart, we are not altogether rejected of God; we are ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας, and can determine that we are so. But in what way? ἐν τούτῳ, by the fact of our having brotherly love in deed and in truth. When we measure ourselves by the terms of the whole previous section, especially from ver. 1 to ver. 10, we must see that we are wanting in the first token of sonship, the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην: our heart condemns us on that account, because we find much unrighteousness still clinging to our lives. Now we perfect the self-judging, in the way the apostle has taught us; and place ourselves in the position

of the last day; and recognise that we cannot stand before God,—that, measured by so strict and absolute a standard, we are not yet altogether withdrawn from the sphere of darkness. But, so long as we live below, we shall never attain to any such maturity as to fix us absolutely on the one side of the religious alternative; we are yet in the process of a development, in the course of a conflict between light and darkness; and it is essential to the idea of such a struggle that the territory contended about belongs not altogether either to the one or to the other of the several powers. In other words: though we must day by day measure ourselves by the standard of the goal set before us, the *οὐ δύνασθαι ἁμαρτάνειν*, we may, on the other hand, know where in the course we are now found; we must needs be assured whether or not we have made a good beginning towards the final victory. This is the question considered and determined in the present verse.

Ver. 19 and the following contain a summary of what goes before; but only in a preliminary way. The question was about the *παῤῥησία* on the day of judgment: if we would know whether that will be ours or not, we must judge ourselves according to our works. If on such a judgment our heart does *not* condemn us, we have already now, and already here, the parrhesia: that is the substance of ver. 21. But if—and this is the other possibility—our hearts condemn us, we being not as yet conscious of the *δικαιοσύνη*, what then? is the question of ver. 20. The confidence or parrhesia of a perfect and secure trust we assuredly cannot in any case have; but something less than this is possible, —we may be joyful in hope if we have only made a good beginning, as evidenced by the required outward practice corresponding to the divine gift within. And this good beginning is brotherly love. It is the first and easiest commandment: for how can he who closes his heart against his brother (ver. 17) love his God? It is the first stage and first test of the love of God. He who has this *ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ* will be able to conclude from his having it that there is the commencement of that love in him, as the evidence of his fellowship with God; and even

supposing him to be not for the moment conscious of it, God is greater and sees deeper: He knows this very beginning that may be concealed from ourselves. True, that in the absolute judgment of eternity no mere beginning will avail; there must be an entire and perfected holiness: thinking on this, we must evermore say that we have not yet attained. But it is, nevertheless, a great thing to know that we have at least made a beginning; for from that springs the confidence that *ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν, ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρις ἡμέρας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (Phil. i. 6). And this very passage demands for the day of Christ the same that St. John demands in our Epistle, ch. ii. 28: the perfection of religion. But it may be repeated, that the beginning of the good work itself inspires the hope that its completion will not be wanting at the last. Thus our verse (20) contains the counterpart of that fearfully solemn doctrine of the judgment to which the apostle had led up in the previous verse; and, indeed, a necessary counterpart, since, unless we bring this also into prominence, the solemnity of the judgment might well lead us to despair.

But, that the consolation which the apostle now administers to those whom he had previously smitten is not sought, as in ch. ii. 1, in the remembrance of the propitiatory death and intercession of the Lord, has its reason in the bearing and motive of the whole section. The question in it is only of the confirmation of fellowship with the Lord,—a fellowship the existence of which must always and only be known by its fruits. As to the reality of my faith, the depth of my devotion to Him, I may deceive myself; I dare not base my security on my feeling; the energies and actings of faith alone give me a sufficient guarantee for my confidence. If these are found in an absolute degree, so that my heart no longer condemns me, then I have the perfect parrhesia; but if they are present in their beginnings only, in vigorous brotherly love, that affords me the consolation of knowing that as to my relation to God the way is fairly open before me. And the inference which I only thus deduce is naked and open before the eyes of Him who *πάντα γινώσκει*. Thus our verse takes its place

in the unity of the chapter as a perfectly homogeneous constituent; and at the same time gives us additional security for the correctness of our interpretation of what goes before.

In conclusion, we may turn our attention for a moment to the word *καρδία*. In express terms and by inference this word has been accepted as interchangeable with *συνείδησις*. This latter word is, as we are aware, unknown to the Johannaean phraseology; for ch. viii. 9 must not come into consideration, on account of its suspected genuineness. It might therefore be regarded as possible or probable that the apostle expressed the more special idea of the conscience by the more general one of the heart. But *καρδία* itself occurs comparatively seldom in St. John's writings; in no case, however, with the meaning of conscience. It rather signifies, especially in those passages which are closely dependent on the Old Testament,—that is, in the Apocalypse (ch. ii. 25, xvii. 17, xviii. 7), and in the citation of John xii. 40 seq.,—the entire inner man, the interior of the nature, corresponding to the quite general לֵב. In other instances of his use, it signifies particularly the life of feeling and sentiment, John xiv. 1, 27, xvi. 6, 22. The only question then is, whether we may take it here in the latter of the senses just mentioned, or must needs limit it to the express idea of *συνείδησις*. This term *συνείδησις* itself occurs in the New Testament with a double application. One is in harmony with the classical *συνειδός*, as the knowledge of anything, especially of an action past: as in Heb. x. 2, where *συνείδησις τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν* is simply the consciousness that my sin is a certain fact of the past, as is made quite clear by the parallel *ἀνάμνησις* of ver. 3. Similarly the *ἀγαθὴ συνείδησις* of Acts xxiii. 11, which is simply the consciousness of the *ἀγαθὸν εἶναι* of the past conversation. In this and similar passages *συνείδησις* defines the moral judgment concerning the ethical position of a person, whether he is good or whether he is evil. On the other hand, St. Paul attaches to *συνείδησις* a more abstract notion: it means the measure of moral discernment which is peculiar to any man, —that is, the consciousness of what *is* good and evil, not the

consciousness of *my* being good or evil. So, for example, in Rom. ii. 15: the *συνείδησις* of the Gentiles is not the judgment or verdict which they pronounce on their own conduct, but the moral consciousness, the moral discernment which belonged to them, out of which that verdict sprang. For, not until after the apostle had first ascribed to them generally such a theoretical knowledge does he in the clause *τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ ἀπολογουμένων* declare the sentence which they themselves pronounce upon their own concrete actions in virtue of that moral consciousness. So, too, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians it is plain we are not to understand by the *συνείδησις τῶν ἀσθενούντων*, who would eat no sacrificed flesh, that they considered this particular thing as sin; the phrase indicates in general the weakness of their moral perception, which allowed them to detect sin, as in other things so in this. To be brief, *συνείδησις* signifies first the abstract moral consciousness, which is quite independent of my own moral conduct, which may be very strong even in ethical wickedness and very weak even in great moral earnestness; and, secondly, the judgment which I pronounce on my own deportment as the result of this my moral discernment. It follows that, if we would make the word *καρδία* in our passage strictly parallel with *συνείδησις*, we must hang to the latter of the two meanings above, for the *καταγινώσκειν* is certainly an *actus forensis*. But it is also made plain how little the Johannaean ideas induce such a strict parallelization with those of St. Paul. They do not entirely coincide or cover each other; hence we do well to consider the *καρδία* as meant simply and generally of the inner man, in which inner man St. John does not so rigorously as St. Paul distinguish between the *νοῦς*, the *λογισμοί*, and the *συνείδησις*.

Verses 21, 22.

Ἀγαπητοί, ἐὰν ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν μὴ καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν, παῤῥησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν· καὶ ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν, λαμβάνομεν παρ' αὐτοῦ· ὅτι τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηροῦμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀρεστὰ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιοῦμεν.

After the apostle has thus illustrated the one presupposition that we are in many ways conscious of sin, and has laid emphasis in connection with that upon brotherly love as token of a life of faith at least germinal in us, he now passes over to the second presupposition, *ἐὰν ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν μὴ καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν*. He obviously regards this case to be possible, as is plain not only from the conditional clause itself, but also from his proceeding at once to base upon it the most important practical consequences. And in this he is found in accordance with St. Paul, who certainly and unconditionally gives himself the testimony, *οὐδὲν ἐμαυτῷ σύνοιδα* (1 Cor. iv. 4). It is indeed a noteworthy psychological fact, that in the hours of the most vivid consciousness of sin all former faith and love will seem to us no more than delusion; but, on the other hand, it is also in hours of more than ordinary elevated faith that we regard sin as under our feet. Of such hours as these last St. John here speaks. At such hours the *παῤῥησία* as towards God appears in force. What we mentioned preliminarily in the explanation of the previous verse must again be brought to remembrance, that the point of view under which in ch. ii. 28 the parrhesia is assumed is not regarded here: it is not the final judgment that is now concerned. Accordingly, it is clear that the section begun with ch. ii. 28 has not here reached its absolute, but only its relative end. That is to say, when the apostle was speaking of the judgment, which we in a certain sense are supposed to anticipate in ourselves after a preliminary and typical manner, the first effect was the question, what results to us as to our condition here below from a course of conduct thus or thus ordered: first, in the case of the imperfect (ver. 20), a consolation springing from the consciousness of God's nearness, at least affecting happily the present time (ver. 2),—that is to say, a feeling of elevation, the *παῤῥησία*. The having our prayers heard is exhibited as a result of this. It is clear from this, first, that the idea of confident *speaking* is prominent to St. John in the *παῤῥησία*; as, finally, before the Judge, so now before the Father we have the consciousness of artless and perfect simplicity and freedom. Even

at the last judgment we may conceive of a real παῤῥησία as a joyous request: of such supplication as that which Christ once preferred on leaving the world, νῦν δόξασόν με πάτερ παρὰ σεαυτῷ. The remembrance of this word is here all the more appropriate, because not only shall we on that day ask to be transfigured into the glory of Christ, as He asked to be transfigured into the glory of the Father, but He also in the same way as we attained the παῤῥησία of His supplication,—that is, through the confirmation of His divine Sonship by the work of perfected obedience (John xiv. 31), and of perfected love to man (John xiii. 1). That which was then the matter of Christ's prayer offered ἐν παῤῥησίᾳ, that which will be the matter of our prayer at the end of the days, the δοξάζεσθαι, the full and absolute fellowship with our Lord, will naturally in some degree be the matter of our prayer even here.

But, on the other hand, the expression ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν points by its generality to a manifold supplication. Had St. John anything definite in his eye? When we bethink ourselves that in the last discourses of Christ to the disciples He reminded them of the confident prayer assured of its answer, and that in two ways, first, when He exhorted them both before and after to brotherly love (John xv. 12–17); and, secondly, when He promised to them the Paraclete (John xvi. 23 seq.), thus showing that He referred to prayer for perfect brotherly love and perfect fellowship with the Father; moreover, that the high-priestly prayer of Jesus Himself partly referred to His own glorification and partly to that of his disciples; again, that in our Epistle, ch. v. 14, the certain assurance of prayer is again mentioned in connection with intercession for erring brethren,—remembering all this, we shall think it probable that in this passage also the apostle had in his mind these two sorts of petition, for the accomplishment of our own salvation and that of our brethren. Thus viewed, our verse assumes a position of definite and necessary importance in the whole section. To him that hath it shall be given: if you have once obtained this parrhesia, you will by virtue of it urge ever renewed supplications for the fulfilment of

our salvation and the consummation of the kingdom of God, and so urge them that you will always obtain what you ask. The *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, that is, fellowship with God, and the *ἀγάπη*, fellowship with the brethren, were the conditions of the *παῤῥησία*; and this again leads to an increased and deeper possession of those two elements of religious experience. The parrhesia and the answer of prayer are strictly correlative ideas. For the former rests upon the knowledge of my fellowship with God; the latter upon the fact that my will is one with the divine: essentially, therefore, they have the same foundation. Hence it becomes probable that the clause with *ὅτι*, which gives the reason, will refer not only to the *λαμβάνειν ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν*, but to the two co-ordinated propositions of the former half of the verse. If we remember that *τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολὰς Θεοῦ* was a main idea of the first part of the Epistle, and that *ποιεῖν* is made prominent in the second, but that the two parts are related as the internal to the external presentation, then we have perceived the relation of the two clauses in our verse.

VERSE 23.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύσωμεν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν.

The commandments which the apostle is discoursing of and commending are now exhibited by him again with reference to their meaning and aim. Two things strike us on a superficial glance: the precepts we must obey are described in their unity (the singular *ἐντολή*), then being again described as twofold; and the import of the second is specified by the word *πιστεύειν*, which now for the first time enters the Epistle. As to the former of these points, the two commandments of faith and brotherly love are in the same sense one commandment, as the two tables of the law are in the issue one table and one law: they enforce simply and only this, I am the Lord thy God, walk before me and be thou perfect. The other question is more difficult, how it is that faith is here so suddenly mentioned,

coming in unintroduced by anything that precedes, and without any bearing on anything that follows. Whenever Christ has been before alluded to, the objective value of His work has been specified as an ἱλασμός, securing the forgiveness of sins, without any reference to the method of subjective appropriation; and whenever the subjective position of man before God has been spoken of, the confirmation of it in act and deed has alone been made prominent, without any side glance at the root and spring of this action. Similarly in the fourth chapter the πιστεύειν recedes into the background in comparison of the ὁμολογεῖν: obviously for the same reason again, because the Epistle has for its aim the confirmation and consummation of the joy of faith by means of the active work of religion, the external expressions of faith. It is not until the fifth chapter that the idea of πίστις begins to lead the development of the thought. All this makes it more urgent to ask why the πιστεύειν enters precisely in our passage, where the word ἐντολή itself points to a course of action and not a state of being, while, on the other hand, it forms the conclusion of a section that professedly treats of works and of works alone.

If we now look at the other ideas brought forward in these verses, it becomes evident that they also are not the same with those which have ruled the contents of the third chapter, but that they have reverted back again to the thoughts and phraseology of the first two chapters. It has been already remarked that τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς, ver. 22, has in the first part of the second chapter its own distinctive position; and similarly, the combination of the various ἐντολαὶ Θεοῦ into the unity of one single commandment, just as we have it here, is observable in the same earlier part of the second chapter. In ver. 24 we find the reciprocal abiding of God in us and our abiding also in God which was already present in the second chapter; and not only so, its juxtaposition or co-ordination with the τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ is substantially to be discerned in that chapter, though not expressed in precisely the same words. On the other hand, any such emphasis on the works as we find pervading the whole of the second

chapter is altogether wanting in our vers. 23 and 24. The first and second chapters contain, as has been fully shown, an exhibition of fellowship with God and the brethren as belonging to the internal character of Christians; and this is met in the third chapter by a requirement of the outward confirmation of that sentiment in act. From this it appears why at the close of this final exposition the apostle falls back again into the tone of the first chapters. The former is supposed to be only the superstructure upon the foundation of the latter. If I *approve* my fellowship with God, then must I *have* it already; and on this having, this internal characteristic of the Christian, rests here in conclusion the apostle's eye. By the works of love to God and man we discern that we keep the commandment of God; but this commandment itself points first and directly, not to the external demonstration of an internal character, but to that internal character itself: not to show that we are, but to be. Thus, therefore, in the requirement of the πιστεύειν and the ἀγαπᾶν, the internal state of the heart is made prominent, of which we all should be and must be partakers.

But all this has only served to vindicate the substance of the πιστεύειν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as appropriate in this place; it is the ἐντολή in its interior spirit and tone; but the expression or phrase itself is not accounted for. Would it not seem more obvious that the apostle should have used the phrase περιπατεῖν ἐν φωτί, or something like that? But we must remember how emphatically the writer has in ch. iii. 2 seq. laid it down that the one essential thing on earth as the indispensable earnest of eternal glory is the following of *Christ;* that he has, further, from the beginning onwards shown that the manifestation of *Christ* is the principle of our entire Christian new life (μένειν ἐν τῷ υἱῷ, ch. ii. 3, 6). Accordingly, throughout the whole process of his discussion it must have been natural to the apostle to lay emphasis upon fellowship with Christ in particular when meaning fellowship with God. That His self-manifestation (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι) as the Son of God (τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ) and as the Saviour of the world

(*Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*) at the same time and especially, has passed into our being and inmost consciousness as a fact determining our life (*πιστεύσωμεν*): that is the will of God on one side. And that this self-revelation of Christ should determine us in the obedience of His commandments (*καθὼς ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν*) to love the brethren (*ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους*): that is the will of God on another side. Thus is explained also the aorist *πιστεύσωμεν*: brotherly love presupposes faith, and this preterite form of the verb serves to indicate that very presupposition. And this shows that in *ἔδωκεν ἐντολήν*, at the close of the verse, Christ is the subject, which is to be assumed also for other reasons, specially because the addition, after the already preceding *αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ*, that is, *Θεοῦ*, would otherwise be perfectly pleonastic. Moreover, brotherly love is throughout the Epistle exhibited by preference as the commandment of Christ; and, further, His person is formally alluded to at the close, and that with a specific emphasis on its two aspects, the divine and the human natures. Faith also is defined as a commandment, though not of Christ but of the Father; and in presence of the fact that precisely in St. John's Gospel the awakening of such a faith is represented as the final goal of the entire work of Christ among men, we need not seek for specific passages that demand from man this faith. Yet these are not entirely wanting. First, John vi. 40 comes at once into consideration: *τοῦτ' ἔστι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.* For it is plain that these words declare not only that in the divine will the believer shall have eternal life, but also that faith is the commanded condition of this life, and therefore equally and in the first instance the matter of the divine will. So again in John xiv. 1: *πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε*, where faith in the Lord enters not as a second requirement by the side of faith in God, but is introduced as the way to the latter, and is really therefore the first requirement of all.

VERSE 24*a*.

Καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

As generally throughout the Epistle, so especially in the passage before us, from ver. 22 to ver. 24, the apostle recurs again and again to the Lord's last discourses. The fundamental ideas are the same in both: the observance of the divine commands, specifically those of faith and brotherly love; the answers to prayer; the abiding in God; and, finally, if we include ver. 24*b*, the mission of the Holy Ghost. We may compare, moreover, John xiv. 11, the requirement of the faith that God is in Christ, corresponding here to faith in Him as the Son of God; and then as the result of that faith, John xiv. 14, 15, *ὅ,τι ἂν αἰτήσητε τοῦτο ποιήσω*, corresponding here to ch. iii. 22, *ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν λαμβάνομεν*. And again, John xiv. 15, *ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με, τὰς ἐντολὰς τὰς ἐμὰς τηρήσατε· καὶ ἐγὼ ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἄλλον παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν*, corresponding here to ver. 24, the mention of the gift of the Spirit in connection with the *τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς*. And the *μένειν*, finally, is really the fundamental idea, as of the last discourses of Jesus, so also of the Epistle before us. In John xiv. 16 the Spirit is sent *ἵνα μένῃ μεθ' ἡμῶν*; in ch. xv. the *μένειν ἐν ἀμπέλῳ* is the centre of the whole parabolical discourse; compare, in proof, ver. 4, *μείνατε ἐν ἐμοὶ κἀγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν*; ver. 7, *ἐὰν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοὶ, καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ, ὃ ἐὰν θέλητε αἰτήσεσθε κ.τ.λ.*; ver. 10, *ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολάς μου τηρήσητε μενεῖτε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ μου*. And as here, at the end of the section, the *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν* is made prominent, so it forms the conclusion of the last discourses of our Lord, the theme of the second part of the high-priestly prayer, that the relation between God and Christ, as it is expressed in the words *ἐγὼ ἐν σοὶ καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί*, is, as it were, to be the pattern of our relation to God, and to find its reflection in us. These simple citations testify abundantly that there and here the thoughts in detail and as a whole correspond.

For the furtherance of a definite view of the spirit of the

passage, we have yet to decide whether the pronouns in ver. 24 refer to the Father or to Christ. If, as we have established, the last words of ver. 23 have Christ for their subject, it seems obvious that in this verse also He is the subject. But Christ had come into consideration in what precedes only as the giver of *one* commandment, that of brotherly love; on the other hand, at the beginning of ver. 23 the Father was mentioned as the proper *νομοθέτης*, and therefore the *τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς* may well refer to the latter; and it is in favour of this that in ch. iv. 13, where a part of our verse is repeated almost literally, the pronouns decidedly must, according to the connection, point to the Father, while certainly the Son, on the other hand, is often in the second chapter the subject of the *μένειν*, as He almost always is in the Gospel. In ch. xv. this is absolutely the case; comp. ver. 4, *μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί*, and the often-repeated *μένετε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ μου*. In ch. xvii., it is true, it begins to be common to the Father and the Son, ver. 21, *ἵνα αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὦσι*; but afterwards, in ver. 23, the Son alone comes forward as the subject: *ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί*.

Thus we have once more reached the end of a division. The thesis with which the apostle set out in ch. ii. 28 seq. was, that our abiding in God, or, more definitely, our sonship to God, must be made manifest in works in order that we may be capable of confidence at the day of judgment. Has this thesis been now actually demonstrated? It has been shown that the idea of the *εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, as well as the requirements of the judgment day, must lead to most scrupulous and complete works of righteousness, to full and perfect deeds of love; and thus that every one who would profess to be of God must exhibit these deeds. But the converse has not been established, though this is quite necessary, namely, that he who doeth these works is necessarily a child of God. It might, indeed, be thought that there could be such a practice of righteousness without the divine sonship; this latter having been rightly defined as not a mere ethical deportment of man, but as a substantial change in his nature preceding and laying the foundation

for that deportment. If I am therefore to enjoy the full parrhesia at the final bar, I must have exhibited not merely a thus and thus well-ordered deportment, but must have the assurance that this deportment could be the result only of a divine sonship or regeneration; and thus the one must help the assurance of the other. And this demonstration, that the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* is not only necessary, but also the certain evidence of the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, it was the apostle's purpose to establish; for otherwise he would, in ch. ii. 29, have been obliged to write *πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ποιεῖ τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, but not *πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται*. It is plain from what has been said that the thesis of ch. ii. 28 seq. has not been fully established, but only in its first principle; we yet want the argument that the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ἀγαπᾶν τοὺς ἀδελφούς*, which have been seen in ch. iii. to be so necessary, are also a certain testimony of regeneration from above. The close of the section now ended points in a preliminary and preparatory way to this internal change of sentiment, of which the works give certain testimony; for, instead of expressions which describe the external conduct, it chooses simply those, as we have seen, which refer to the inner mind. *That* we, in the consciousness of upright walking before God (*ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*) and before the brethren (*ἀγαπᾶν*), attain to confidence, and the more perfect that consciousness is to all the more perfect confidence, has been already shown; but *how far* and in what sense this our conduct lays the foundation of confidence, how far it is the absolutely sure evidence of fellowship with God, has yet to be shown. When the apostle enters upon this question, and gives us to *know* (*γινώσκειν*) that we in this way are united with God, he furnishes the complement of the third chapter. The new section, whose theme is contained in ver. 24*b*, will be, so far as we can now perceive, co-ordinated with the third chapter, but only as subordinate to the theme announced in ch. ii. 28 seq.

VERSE 24*b*.

Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν.

The contents of the new section are preliminarily determined by two points in ver. 24, the mention of the *πνεῦμα* at the close, and the *γινώσκετε ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν*. This latter must be compared at once with the beginning of the second main division, ch. ii. 28, where we read, *καὶ νῦν τεκνία μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ*, thus the precise converse of our present passage. This is of importance for the whole matter of the section. For we have already become persuaded that these two phrases are not identical, but that the *μένειν ἐν Θεῷ* makes prominent the human relation in the Christian estate, and the *μένειν Θεὸν ἐν ἡμῖν* the divine. Now, at the close of the second chapter it was strictly in keeping that we should hear the exhortation to abide in God, for there the apostle's aim was to show that it was our duty to approve our fellowship with God by works; therefore the question was of the human relation. But our new section begins with God's abiding in us, because the apostle is about to point to the fact that our works make it evident that we are born of God,—that is, that God had begun and was carrying on His work within us. Thus the very expression leads us at once to the subject which our study of the previous train of thought in the Epistle gave us reason to expect in the new section. The second element is the mention of the *πνεῦμα*. That this will be a leading idea in the new part is shown by this, that in ver. 13, at the close, namely, of the development here beginning, the clause is repeated: it must therefore have been reckoned by the writer as containing its substance. And this is all the more striking as the idea *πνεῦμα*, not failing, indeed, in the detailed discussion, is nevertheless only found at the beginning of it, and afterwards altogether retreats from view.

Let us, in order to harmonize these facts, take a preliminary glance at the sequel. It is obvious at once that the two main themes which we have hitherto found in each section of the Epistle recur here also: vers. 1–6 treat of

our relation to the Lord; vers. 7–12, of our relation to the brethren; vers. 13–16 then give us a supplementary summary from one point of view, or, more strictly speaking, the essence of the two discussions. It is of the nature of such a *resumé* that the thoughts which are summed up should be reduced to the briefest expression; in it, therefore, we shall be able most easily to perceive the substance of the two preceding sections. The former is comprehended in this, that God has sent His Son, and the confession of this divine act guarantees fellowship with God; the second is comprehended in this, that God is love, and he who hath this love must, again, have fellowship with God. Thus fellowship with God and consciousness of it—for our verse shows that the γινώσκειν ὅτι μένει ἐν ὑμῖν is the apostle's point—rests upon the acknowledgment and appropriation of a divine act and of the divine nature of love. But where the acknowledgment of the divine act in the incarnation of Christ exists, there, as vers. 1–6 show, must the Holy Ghost have wrought it; similarly, where love to the brethren exists, there, according to vers. 7–12, it must have resulted from the love of God, and thus again have been produced by the same Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the argument of the apostle is generally this: where there is a true confession of the incarnate Son of God, it is the effect of the operation of the Holy Spirit; where love exists, it is the outflowing of a divine love imparted first, and consequently is wrought of God: he, therefore, who is the subject of this confession and this love is in fellowship with God, and hath the Holy Ghost, who is the sole agent of all the operations of God in man. This, therefore, perfectly establishes the thesis laid down in ch. ii. 28 seq. According to ch. iii. 3, the apostle requires that our ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην should spring from the example of Christ the incarnate (ch. iii. 5, ἐφανερώθη), and now exalted (ch. iii. 2), Son of God. But where the true acknowledgment of the Son of God exists, it must be of the operation of the Holy Spirit (ch. iv. 1–6); if, therefore, in this confession, and urged by it, we practise righteousness, we have in ourselves the evidence that we are in God, and God in us. Similarly,

brotherly love shows, inasmuch as it can be only the expression of a divinely-wrought love (ch. iv. 7–12) if it demonstrates its reality by works (ch. iii. 11–18), that we are of God. Chapters iii. and iv. thus together contain, in fact, the effectual demonstration of ch. ii. 28, 29. Their relation to each other is also, as we have already seen, this: that ch. iii. shows the necessity of deeds, ch. iv. the security of the confident argument based upon them. The exposition of the details will abundantly confirm all this.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 1.

Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε, ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα, εἰ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν· ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

The first six verses of the fourth chapter give evidence of the conclusion that the confession of the incarnate Son of God is the assurance of the energy of the Holy Ghost within us. This demonstration is so conducted as to set over against the Holy Spirit, who testifies of Christ and for Christ, the spirit of the world and of Antichrist, which not only opposes this witness, but diffuses the opposite lie. Thus it is an argument *e contrario*. The exhortation of the first verse is thus not the main thing to the apostle; but the emphasis lies on ver. 2*b*: *πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ κ.τ.λ., ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν*. The Holy Spirit, indeed, is the sure token of divine sonship, but there are many spirits; hence a test is necessary, a standard must be found, to distinguish the divine Spirit from lying spirits. Now assuredly there are only two *πνεύματα*, that of God and that of the darkness; but since each of these assumes a different character in individual men, there must be as great a variety of spirits as there is of individuals, while yet they fall into two classes, according as they bear the signature in themselves of the divine or the anti-Christian spirit. Now the necessity of such a testing the apostle grounds on this (*ὅτι*), that lying spirits are not only possible, but also in great numbers actually emerge. The *ψευδοπροφῆται* are not here alone, but everywhere in the New Testament, wherever they are spoken of, connected most intimately with the Antichrist; and as the token of this here and everywhere, there is only one thing adduced, that is, the

denial of the mission of Christ. In Matt. xxiv. and the parallels the ψευδόχριστοι are named together with the false prophets; the former are false Christs, and the latter bear testimony to them as if they were true Christs. In Acts xiii. 6, Bar-jesus announces himself as a false prophet, in that he opposes the preaching of St. Paul concerning Christ. In 2 Pet. ii. 2 we have the sign of false prophets, that they τὸν ἀγοράσαντα αὐτοὺς δεσπότην ἀρνοῦνται; and in the Apocalypse it is the false prophet who seduces men to the beast,—that is, to apostasy from Christ. Thus there is literally everywhere the connection with anti-Christianity.

Yet it is not to be overlooked that the name false prophet is more comprehensive in St. John than in the Synoptists. For as he understands by the ἀντίχριστος something more general than they understand by their ψευδόχριστος,—that is, not only those who give themselves out for Christ, but all who are opposed to Him, who belong to the host of the arch-Antichrist,—so also the false prophets are in his estimation not only those who bear testimony to a false Christ, but all who do not give due honour to the true One. Thus it comes to pass that in the Synoptists the false prophets are only servants and helpers of the Antichrist; in St. John they appear as antichrists themselves. Further, it is not accidental that here ψευδοπροφῆται is used, and not ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι. In the former word, to wit, prominence is given to their dependence on a higher spirit working in the souls of men; but this token is wanting in the latter word. Since in our passage the question is of that very higher principle energizing in men's souls, the former word, and not the latter, is appropriate. And these prophets of the lie εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐξεληλύθασιν. The words may bear two interpretations: either we may take the ἐξεληλύθασιν here in the same sense as ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθον in ch. ii. 19, of the origination of the false teachers in the bosom of the congregation, in which case κόσμος is the world as the enemy of the church; or we may understand the ἐξεληλυθέναι quite generally as *prodire*, without referring the ἐξ to the bosom of the church, and then κόσμος is the world in its widest meaning, as the scene of

their activity. This latter is recommended, not only by the circumstance that the ἐξ ἡμῶν of ch. ii. 19 is wanting here, and that without any hint that could supplement it in the connection, but also by some more urgent reasons. For the clause containing the statement that many false teachers had gone out from the congregation into the world, and given in their adhesion to the kingdom of darkness, is by no means a foundation for the requirement δοκιμάζειν τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν. Such spirits would not have needed to be tested; they had become manifest by their very severance from the church. If it was a plain and palpable fact, and this is presupposed by the ὅτι which assigns a reason, that they had gone out into the ungodly κόσμος, then in this fact there could be no inducement to the δοκιμάζειν, for itself was the accomplishment of the δοκιμασία. Therefore we take the κόσμος in the wider meaning of the scene of the activity of these liars, and the ἐξέρχεσθαι as their appearing. That, in fact, they had gone from the midst of the Christian community is not indeed denied, it is simply not asserted here; that it was so is to be assumed from the fact that the false prophets of this passage must be identified with the antichrists of the second chapter (compare especially, ch. iv. 3). If we must find an express allusion in the ἐξέρχεσθαι, we must think of the kingdom of darkness generally from which they sprang, and into which they in due time will be thrust out as being their ἴδιος τόπος.

This trying of the spirits, which the presence of the lying prophets thus alluded to so urgently required, must all Christians discharge; for the exhortation is addressed to the entire community. Indeed, there was, according to 1 Cor. xii. 10, a proper χάρισμα τῆς διακρίσεως πνευμάτων, which was related to the charism of the prophets as the ἑρμηνεία was related to the γλώσσαις λαλεῖν; but as every charism was potentially the property of every Christian, the apostle might well enforce, nevertheless, this testing duty upon all. In the very presupposition that all had the Holy Spirit, lay the possibility that every one might detect the spirit opposed.

VERSE 2.

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκετε τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ· πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι.

St. John mentions and commends the standard of judgment in ver. 2: we must take *γινώσκετε* in the imperative sense; that elsewhere the indicative *γινώσκομεν* so often occurs, cannot affect the application of the second person here. These few words must be all the more carefully studied, because their meaning is so important: the decision concerning others, yea, the decision concerning my own relation to God. An *ὁμολογεῖν* is demanded: the question is not here of *πίστις*, for that is an act of my inmost and most secret life; visible to no other, often unknown to myself while often I am conscious of it, it cannot be a standard or mark for judgment upon others. It is something that must show itself, and be confirmed, and that in act (ch. iii.); but the act must be judged by its motive and spring, and this judgment is measured by the confession that I make concerning my motive. But thus it is not the confession of itself which is laid down as a standard, as if it were opposed to the fear of confession; the emphasis rests upon the matter of the confession or its object. In general, it is made plain by a comparison of ver. 3, where the right reading comprehends the full contents of the confession in the one word *Ἰησοῦς*, that the question here is of the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth.

But in what sense, we must again more closely ask, is this to be the matter of my confession? What concerning it am I to confess? Here, first of all, the words must be grammatically arranged in their due order. Much depends on the grammatical place of the word *Χριστόν*. Is it to be immediately combined with *Ἰησοῦν*, so that Jesus Christ is the definition of the person concerning whom something —that is, the *ἐληλυθέναι ἐν σαρκί*—is to be confessed? or is it to stand as an attributive, so that I am to confess Jesus as the Christ, and that He appeared as such in the flesh? In the former case, the apostle presupposes that Jesus is the Christ; and his requirement is only this, that

I avow this Jesus Christ to have become incarnate; in the other case, the presupposition is that there must be a confession concerning Jesus, and the requirement is that I avow concerning Him Messiahship and incarnation. The question is not an irrelevant one, nor one of mere logomachy. If we take the former view, we suppose that the confession demanded was in opposition to Docetism, which acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, as sent of God, as the *ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενον*, but not as real man, who had become flesh; if we take the latter view, we suppose it demanded in opposition to Ebionism, which would not acknowledge Jesus as the incarnate *Christ*, but denied His higher nature. For it is quite certain that *Χριστός* here does not define Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Jews, but expresses His higher and divine nature. It is true that the former is the meaning in all those passages of the Gospels where by Jews, or in opposition to Jews, Jesus is described as the Christ. But wherever *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* is used as a proper name, the former word expresses His human nature, the latter His divine; and in a series of places *Χριστός* simply is interchangeable with *υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Thus it is in John i. 17, where the words *ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς κ.τ.λ.* define the meaning of the *Χριστός*; thus it is in John iii. 28, for the subsequent words in ver. 31, *ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος*, define the substance of the name. In our Epistle we must hold fast this significance in every passage where *Χριστός* occurs: in ch. i. 5 it is clear from the added clause that Jesus Christ is introduced as the Son of God; in ch. ii. 22 the denial of Jesus as the Christ is more closely defined by the words of ver. 23, *ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱόν*; the close of the ninth verse of the second Epistle confirms this meaning of the name. And finally, as it concerns our present passage, it may be most absolutely proved that Christ is interchangeable with Son of God. First, the sum of Christian doctrine which the apostle here lays down is identical with that which he utters in John i. 14, *ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο*, and therefore the *Χριστός* here corresponds to the idea of *λόγος* there. Secondly, in the *resumé* of our section in ver. 14 the apostle sums up what he here says thus, that God sent

His Son as Saviour into the world: thus the Χριστός here is equivalent to υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ there; just as similarly in ver. 15 he demands the confession that Jesus is the Son of God.

After having established the full significance of the word Christ, let us turn back to the original question: does the apostle demand the confession that the Son of God, who is acknowledged Jesus by the supposition, became flesh and a true man; or does he demand that the man Jesus be acknowledged as the Son of God? In other words: Is the divinity of Jesus the thing acknowledged, the humanity in its full meaning the thing doubted,—that is to say, the thing denied; or is it precisely the converse of this? Finally, in the grammatical *terminis*, does Χριστόν belong to the subject or to the predicate? In favour of the former, it may be urged that the combination Ἰησοῦς Χριστός is so common, that if the apostle had meant to divide them, he must have shown his intention by his specific arrangement; and this he might easily have done by simply putting the Ἰησοῦν before the ὁμολογεῖν. Not the less on that account must we decide for the separation of the Χριστόν from the Ἰησοῦν. For the recapitulation in ver. 14, and especially that of ver. 15, shows that the matter of primary importance to the apostle here was the recognition of Jesus as the Son of God: he sums up the confession introduced before to this effect, that Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. Now if, as we have seen, Χριστός here is equivalent with υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ there, it cannot belong to the subject, but must be separated as the predicate of the confession demanded. Thus the question which should serve for the δοκιμασία πνευμάτων was the old one: What think ye of Jesus? The right answer to the question was the common confession of the church concerning His divine-human person as the God-man; but this introduced in such a way that the emphasis rests upon the divinity, while the humanity is here, as everywhere else in the New Testament, simply taken for granted or not open to any suspicion.

In making the divinity prominent, the apostle does not say that Christ became flesh, but that He came into the flesh. Concerning His birth as the physical entrance into

the world, St. John neither here nor anywhere else uses ἔρχεσθαι εἰς τὸν κόσμον and the like; it is always rather with him the coming as the result of a higher divine causality. All the three Johannaean documents agree in representing the coming of Jesus as essentially a coming from heaven. Ἦν ἐρχόμενον τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν is the announcement of the gospel, coming, that is, from the Father into the world; the Saviour promises to His disciples His own coming from the Father, to whom He returns as the Paraclete; the entire Apocalypse revolves around the ναὶ ἔρχου Κύριε Ἰησοῦ, His final coming from heaven. Accordingly, it is not the intention of the apostle to aver here primarily that the Son of God became truly man,—that follows only from the words used,—but by the ἔρχεσθαι to indicate plainly that the man Jesus was nevertheless the Son of God, that He came into this humanity from heaven, and therefore entered it as the eternal Logos.

We are then to regard Christ in our thoughts as ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα. The phrase expresses something different from εἰς σάρκα, and something more than εἰς τὸν κόσμον. Something different from εἰς σάρκα, for this would mean only that He descended into the sphere of the σάρξ, of humanity as infected by sin and guilt, without expressing in what sense He personally became σάρξ. Something higher than εἰς τὸν κόσμον; for we have already seen on ch. ii. 16 that κόσμος is a much more comprehensive idea than σάρξ: all potencies opposed to God which are found in the κόσμος are condensed in the σάρξ, in human nature sold under sin, as in a focus. Σάρξ means human nature not in itself, nor as exclusively in its corporeal relation, but that human nature as having sin lodged in it. Sin does not originate indeed in the σῶμα of man; but all that man is and does makes for itself an organ in the body, makes indeed the body its organ. Not only does the body of man participate in the dissolution of the human constitution which entered as the effect of sin, sickness, suffering, and death itself included, but every sinful psychical impulse conditions or determines man's bodily nature, inasmuch as, in consequence of sinful impulses, the body is adapted to the

service of sin, and unfitted for the service of righteousness. Thus, while we cannot indeed say that the flesh, that is, the body infected with sin, is itself sin, for sin can be predicated only of that which is psychical or spiritual, it is nevertheless pervaded through and through by the results of sin. As nature cannot be evil, though no longer by any means responding to the original design of the Creator, not being any longer the representative and organ of pure, divine thoughts, so also is it with the body of man. And this corporeity thus perverted is the *σάρξ* in which Christ must appear if He would and should approve Himself the *σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου* (ver. 14). He must thus be manifested in it as the Reconciler or Atonement, thus also as the Redeemer. As the former, for in taking upon Himself the *σάρξ*, He bore all the consequences of sin; not even His body was the adequate and homogeneous organ of His spirit, as St. Paul declares in the averment of His *ἀσθένεια* (2 Cor. xiii.); He tasted thoroughly the sorrow which sin has poured out upon the whole human estate and life. But by this very fact He has *redeemed* us from the *σάρξ*; for in that He, by virtue of the power of the Spirit indwelling in Him, gradually overcame, blessed and glorified the *σάρξ*, that is, the corporeity deteriorated and bound by sin, it has become a *σῶμα τῆς δόξης*, or *σῶμα πνευματικόν*, that is to say, a body which is the absolutely perfect organ of the spirit; and thereby He has opened the way for us also on our part to undergo this process of glorification with our *σάρξ*.

Now he who confesses to this Son of God, who was manifested in the flesh, gives witness that he has the *πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας*, for no man can call Jesus Lord but by His Holy Spirit; thus also, in his case, the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* is the glorifying process upon the flesh wrought through Christ's Spirit, and after His pattern.[1] His works are therefore the full pledge of His divine sonship, which fact the apostle aims here to corroborate with force. Thus this section concurs with the former to make one whole. And the confession here demanded is not alone an unconditional token of my estate of grace; for, while it does indeed prove that the Holy Spirit is operating within me,

it does not prove that my whole personal life is brought under His power; again, the testimony of works demanded in ch. iii. is then only efficient when it is certain that these works have the right principle as their source, that is, the Holy Ghost. Both these elements taken together, however, establish an unassailable security.

VERSE 3.

Καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστι· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν ἤδη.

Over against this true *πνεῦμα* the apostle now introduces the false one: to the Spirit of Christ is opposed that of antichrist. But we have first to establish the genuine reading. It is generally admitted that the object denied is defined as simply *τὸν Ἰησοῦν*, and that the *Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα* of the *Textus receptus* is an addition. If, now, the right reading is *πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν*, this must be so explained as to show that the apostle connects with the name Jesus the whole matter that he had announced in the previous verse. And, in fact, a confession of Jesus is impossible without the full substance of that: if I do not hold Him to be the Son of God, I may speak of Him and know, but I have then nothing to confess. To confess to a MAN is a thing without meaning: it is nothing. But it is to me doubtful whether the reading given above is the genuine one. The old reading, *πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ λύει τὸν Ἰησοῦν*, appears to me to have more value than is mostly conceded to it. That it was quoted by Socrates as an ancient one is indeed unquestionable. The words referred to are these: [Nestorius] *ἠγνόησεν ὅτι ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ Ἰωάννου ἐγέγραπτο ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἀντιγράφοις, ὅτι πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ λύει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν. Ταύτην γὰρ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐκ τῶν παλαιῶν ἀντιγράφων περιεῖλον οἱ χωρίζειν ἀπὸ τοῦ τῆς οἰκονομίας ἀνθρώπου βουλόμενοι τὴν θεότητα κ.τ.λ.* (*Hist. Eccles.* vii. 32). Düsterdieck supposes that it does not follow from these words that the verse so ran, as Nestorius quoted

them; he thinks that the phrase *περιεῖλον τὴν διάνοιαν* shows rather that he was only giving the sense of the text. But in this he is wrong. We cannot see what end the mention of the *παλαιὰ ἀντίγραφα* would serve if there was not in them something different from what the Nestorians read in these texts. If the heretics only by exegetical manipulation made the *meaning* of the passage favourable to their views, nothing was to be gained by a reference to the old manuscripts, and the word *διάνοια* thus receives its rights. While the heretics changed the words, they did also in the judgment of Socrates change the sense of them. It cannot therefore be denied that we have the testimony of Socrates that ὃ λύει was the original reading. For the rest, indeed, the words are not to be pressed; in spite of the repeated *τὰ παλαιὰ ἀντίγραφα*, we may not believe that all the manuscripts were collated by Socrates and found to give evidence of his reading. Further, it is to be observed that in the time of this Father even the manuscript λύει was no longer common, since, opposing Nestorius, he in a certain sense introduces the old reading as a novelty: *ἠγνόησεν*. In itself, therefore, the testimony of Socrates to a reading no longer found in any manuscript would have no great weight; but we have other witnesses. Among these we reckon Tertullian first. It is true that his citation in *De carne Christi*, ch. xxiv. ("certe qui negat Christum in carne venisse, hic antichristus est"), seems on the first glance to support the *Textus receptus*. But it is so only in appearance; for we have not here an exact quotation of our verse, but a blending of it with part of the preceding; the idea of the *in carne venire* was the chief thing with Tertullian, and must therefore be made prominent whether his copy read *μὴ ὁμολογεῖ* or λύει. This passage, therefore, is decisive on neither side. But it is otherwise with the citation, *adv. Marcion.* v. 16. Tertullian agitates the question as to whom St. Paul meant in 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, and answers: "secundum nos quidem antichristus . . . ut docet Joannes apostolus, qui jam antichristos dicit processisse in mundum praecursores antichristi spiritus, negantes Christum in carne venisse et solventes Jesum,

scilicet in Deo creatore." In these words he gives an extract from the first three verses of our chapter: the *processisse in mundum* refers to the first verse; the *in carne venisse* to the second; the *solventes* to the third. As the second verse specifies as a sign of the reception of the Holy Ghost, the ὁμολογεῖν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα, he simply inverts this; the Antichrist denies that fact and confession. So, too, the change of Christ in the second, of Jesus in the third member, points to the fact that the former was to be the second, and the latter the third verse. Tertullian, therefore, had not, as some suppose, the true readings of the third verse before his eyes; but only the one, ὃ λύει, and what precedes was derived from the second verse. Nor is the *solventes Jesum* to be regarded as a gloss or addition of Tertullian, for the construction of the sentence, *dicit processisse negantes et solventes*, manifestly indicates that the latter words also belong to his citation: it is only in the following *scilicet* that the gloss of the expositor enters. If we add to all this the quotation from *adv. Psych.* i., "quod Jesum Christum solvant," and further, that Irenaeus, somewhat earlier than Tertullian, has the same reading (*adv. Haer.* iii. 18), we shall find it impossible to doubt the existence of this reading. It will hardly be thought necessary to go further, and examine the testimonies of Leo and Augustine, the latter of whom does not certainly unite the two readings, as is thought, when he says, *solvit Jesum et negat in carne venisse:* rather does he mark the meaning of the obscure and difficult *solvere* by adding the clause derived from the previous verse, which alone makes it intelligible. If in this citation of Augustine the *solvere* did not rest upon a reading in the text, but was inserted merely as an interpretation, it would have been more appropriately inserted, not before the *negare*, but after it. Against the genuineness of this reading as the original one—its early existence cannot be contended against after what has been said—we have the fact of that earliest citation of our Epistle and of this passage of it in Polycarp, *Phil.* 7: πᾶς ὃς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθέναι ἀντίχριστός

ἐστιν. When we weigh this narrowly, however, we find that even this citation says nothing against the existence of the ὃ λύει: were it not so, it would be of great significance against the reading, for Polycarp certainly was older than the παλαιὰ ἀντίγραφα of Socrates. We have, in fact, here no actual literal citation, but a paraphrastic interpretation of the passage: there is hardly a word of the third verse which is distinctly reproduced in the passage of Polycarp. The reason was the same which actuated Augustine and the others: the expression λύειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν was found too difficult to make a clear sense as standing alone. To me, therefore, it seems highly probable that in fact the reading in dispute was in the original text, and that it was very early lost. But how? that question cannot well be answered of course: probably through the intrusion of an explanatory gloss. Certainly the Oriental manuscripts must at the time of the Nestorian controversies have contained the text of the Catholic manuscripts on the whole as we read them now; for otherwise they would assuredly not have forgotten to cast their falsification of the Scripture in the teeth of the heretics. Moreover, internal reasons strongly recommend the reading ὃ λύει τὸν Ἰησοῦν. The phrase μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν seems always to my feeling something harsh; one involuntarily expects an attributive definition of the object to be confessed. On the other hand, λύειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν is an expression which, after the preceding verse, is as intelligible as it is pregnant: it signifies to rend asunder those two sides of the person of Jesus as they had been united in the phrase Χριστὸν ἐληλυθότα ἐν σαρκί, which referred pre-eminently, as we find in the explanation of ver. 2, to the denial of the divinity of Christ. Lastly, it is more in harmony with St. John's manner not to make the two points in an antithesis simply contradictory of each other: he would scarcely write ὁμολογεῖν and μὴ ὁμολογεῖν, but place in the second member something positive.

The second half of the verse now declares that such a denial of the incarnation is not only a token that one is not of God, but a stamp also of positive anti-Christianity.

As it respects the meaning, it is comparatively matter of indifference whether with each of the neuters, *τοῦτο* and *τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου*, the *πνεῦμα* is supplied; or whether we regard *τὸ μὴ ὁμολογεῖν* (*λύειν*) as the contents of *τοῦτο*, and translate *τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου* as the nature or characteristic of the Antichrist. Both are grammatically possible, though the former seems on the whole the more obvious. The Antichrist, concerning whom ye have heard that he will appear as the highest and most fearful error, and as the most bitter enemy of Jesus, has manifested himself in this denying of the divine-human nature of Jesus. He who was to come is already in the world: in the future he will be the final, perfected, and personal exhibition of the principle; now he is present in the first beginnings of the principle.

VERSES 4–6.

Ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστε, τεκνία, καὶ νενικήκατε αὐτούς· ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν, ἢ ὁ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰσί· διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου λαλοῦσι, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν ἀκούει. ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐσμεν· ὁ γινώσκων τὸν Θεὸν, ἀκούει ἡμῶν· ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. Ἐκ τούτου γινώσκομεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.

The opposite principles which animate Christians and the antichrists have their reflection also in the relation of both to the world: the antichrists are in full friendship with it; *ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν ἀκούει*; Christians are at enmity with it, and that a victorious enmity. From the principle the apostle passes to the effects of it; and thus connects and combines his discussion of the *πνεῦμα* as operating in the Christian with that upon his practical life as given in the third chapter. For, *νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον* and *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* are interchangeable ideas. Already in the second chapter the *ἀγαπᾶν τὸν κόσμον* is placed in opposition to the *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί*; in the third it was exhibited as the work of Christ, as His *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, that He vanquished the devil: then the deeds of His members will consist in this, that, as their Head overcame the head, so they, the members, shall overcome

the members of the kingdom of darkness; that is to say, vanquish the κόσμος. There is here below no mere positive construction, no mere negative destruction: all doing of good is at once building up and pulling down. For this correlative arrangement of the νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον and ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, we may compare, in particular, ch. v. 3, 4, where the ἐντολὰς Θεοῦ τηρεῖν and τὸν κόσμον νικᾶν are equivalent terms and ideas.

What our section contains as to the trying of the spirits, and the relation between the Christian and the anti-Christian spirit, is accordingly only the means used by the apostle to bring out his subject, not the absolute end he has in view: his sole end is the sign that the Holy Ghost is the energy and spring of all holy action. That the testing the spirits is only the means in his exposition appears at once from the beginning of the fourth verse. For there it is declared as a fact, the reality of which is simply presupposed, that the readers have the Holy Ghost and are therefore of God: this is the main proposition of the apostle, to which all the rest leads up. But this, of course, implies at the same time that the victory over the antichrists is achieved. That victory is accomplished (perfect); for, in that the church has turned away from all error, and witnessed the good confession laid down in the preceding words, it has already been successful in the conflict and overcome the anti-Christianity: yet not indeed in its own power, but through the power of the Holy Ghost ruling in it. The carrying back of all human activity for good to a divine influence is quite characteristic of this section. Ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν is the God who hath given us His Spirit, and thereby begotten us of Himself. Ὁ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ is he who elsewhere is called the ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (John xii. 31). The prince of the world has his work in the false prophets, for —thus it is in ver. 5—these belong to the world, to the kingdom of darkness pervaded and governed by sinful powers; and therefore the world acknowledges them as flesh of its flesh, and hears them. Ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου λαλοῦσι: that is, all their words are moulded and ordered by the spirit ruling in the world, and therefore have a

well-known and familiar sound to the children of the world. Compare John xv. 19: *εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἦτε, ὁ κόσμος ἂν τὸ ἴδιον ἐφίλει.* It is obvious that the converse must also be true (ver. 6): we who are of God must be understood by him who himself knows the divine. The pronouns refer, according to the connection, not to the apostles alone, but the whole Christian fellowship; for they cannot possibly have another subject than the *γινώσκομεν* in the second half of the verse, and that this refers to all Christians is perfectly obvious. The *ὁμολογεῖν* of ver. 2 indeed referred not to any individual, but to all who would belong to the Christian community: they all witness the same confession, and they all understand that confession when it is borne by others. Each is at once the speaker and hearer of the confession.

The second period brings in the end of the discussion. By this we may know the Spirit of the truth and the spirit of error. But what is meant by the *ἐκ τούτου*? Is it the substance of the entire six verses; or only the last, the *ἀκούειν* on the part of the world or of the children of God? Certainly the former, and pre-eminently the confession of the incarnate Son; for the last three verses have, in fact, only laid down the effect which such a confession produces: enmity of the world, friendship of the children of God, in other words, incorporation into the whole organism of the divine kingdom.

VERSE 7.

Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους· ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ γινώσκει τὸν Θεόν.

Hitherto St. John has exhibited the confession of the Son of God manifested in the flesh as the principle of the divine life in man: the foundation he lays, therefore, is not anything that is in us, but something that God has done for us. Similarly, he places—this is the meaning of the paragraph from ver. 7 to ver. 12—the ground of our love to the brethren not in ourselves; he makes it only the reflection of the divine love to us, therefore the result

again of what has been wrought for and upon us. Thus, when he begins with the hortatory *ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους*, we are to regard this only as the introductory form, the sentence of transition; the essence of the section is not an exhortation, but, so to speak, a physiology of love. We ought to love, for *ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι*: it has its home, its primal dwelling-place, in God; thus where there is love, there is somewhat that must have come from Him. Hence, therefore, he who loveth is born of God, and he is a partaker of the divine nature; to him God hath revealed Himself, and he on his part knoweth God. *Γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* and *γινώσκειν τὸν Θεόν* are related as principle to result, as gift and appropriation of the gift. We have here once more the same fundamental principle which in ch. iii. 2 is so clearly prominent, that all knowing presupposes a spiritual likeness to the person known; and that knowledge of the divine rests upon a possession of the divine. If, accordingly, the knowledge of God is a result of divine regeneration, and this again is discernible by the evidence of love, it follows that the absence of this token allows the conclusion to be drawn, that there is a lack of the knowledge of God.

But here it is also shown clearly that to the apostle the *γινώσκειν* is something very different from a thinking based upon merely logical categories. It is indeed perfectly possible that a man may understand all the teaching of Scripture concerning God, and receive it into his mental being, without having any real love. But such a fact as that does not contradict the apostle's assertion. For he who knows all plants by their scientific names, classes, and orders, but has never seen any of them, must be held to be far from knowing the plants. In like manner, he who professes to know God without love has no spiritual perception, no experience of Him; because his ideas are only constituent elements out of which he seeks to produce a living unity. He therefore proves that his idea of God is a false one, since God is not a substance compounded of marks and attributes. Only from experience, that is, from devotion, can there spring any *γινώσκειν τὸν Θεόν*; since

love, which is here represented as the token of a divine birth, is supposed to be the pure copy or mere effluence of the divine love, we, of course, must not limit it to the love of the brethren, but must understand it in its widest meaning.

VERSE 8.

Ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν, οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν Θεὸν, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν.

As if it was impossible for the apostle with too much formality to draw out a contrast, he employs here also another antithesis which ver. 8 presents to ver. 7, in order to add an impressive enlargement to the thought. Before, he had taught that *ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐστιν*; now, he teaches that *ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν*. But what does this import? Love is primarily under all circumstances a reciprocal idea, or idea of relation: it necessarily requires a loving subject and an object loved. Even in self-love this maintains its truth; for that can exist only where the subject is conscious of itself as an object, and has differenced a self from the self. In love the subject goes out of itself; and this takes place more particularly in that it opens itself towards another, and communicates itself. Moreover, it lies in the nature of love that what it imparts is something good; is, in fact, a good: communication of what is evil as such is the opposite of love; it can only take place at all under the supposition that I regard the evil erroneously as something good. To wish to communicate what is known to be evil is Satanic, and therefore the precise opposite of loving. Accordingly, there are in the idea of love two things: one, the presupposition that I have a good, or, more particularly, since good if ethically considered cannot be an accident, that I am good; another, that I refer this good not to myself, but to another, or am conscious of the tendency to impart it. If, now, it is said that God not only has love, but is love, that means His being altogether and only love, love and nothing but love; and in that again appears the second thing, that He not only has good in itself, but that He is altogether good, has all perfection, and absolutely refers nothing to Himself, but all to others.

By means of this it is possible to determine the relation which exists between the definition of the divine nature given here and that of ch. i. 5, God is light. That given in our passage presupposes, as we have seen, that goodness is the essential quality of God which in virtue of His ἀγάπη εἶναι He communicates. This essential quality is in ch. i. 5 described by the term φῶς. We found φῶς to be the compendium of all His perfections, the πλήρωμα of His nature; it is, in fact, the definition of the metaphysical essence of God, as ἀγάπη is of that of His ethical nature; the former is the immanent side of the divine essence, the latter the transitive which presupposes the former; and the two together express nothing but this, that God at no moment and in no measure ever has, or ever can, or ever does refer the perfect fulness of His being to Himself. The unfathomable and inconceivable fulness of life which is named as φῶς is from eternity to eternity existent under only the modality of love. Against the unlimited force of the Θεὸς ἀγάπη is dashed to pieces every notion which represents God as in any way or at any time living a life turned toward self or folded within self.

If we take the two definitions Θεὸς φῶς and Θεὸς ἀγάπη together, we reach the result that no action of God is conceivable which has not for its aim the demonstration of love; and that there is no evidence of love which has not for its substance the communication of the divine nature of light, of the divine δόξα. If this self-communication of perfect love is conceived as in a literally absolute sense consummate, as a ray of light passing unbroken from one point to another, then we have the eternal ἀπαύγασμα καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς δοξῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ, the Son. If it is conceived as dispersing itself in all possible gradations of colour, which in their combination and sum, however, are again like the colourless indifference of pure light, without image, —consummate in time and space,—then we have the world, or, as it is called in its final reference to God, the divine kingdom. Thus it is plain how not only Christ, but the ἐκκλησία, that is, the church, the perfected kingdom of God, with its body, the earthly creation, may be

called the πλήρωμα of God. If, then, light and love are as inseparably the nature divine as form and matter make up any material thing, then it follows that every one who is born of God must be a partaker of this light and of this love. But as, according to ver. 7, the birth from God is the presupposition of the γινώσκειν αὐτόν, the conclusion reached in our eighth verse is perfectly clear, that he who loves not cannot know God,—that is, because he is not born of Him.

VERSE 9.

Ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ.

That love, which God is in His inmost essence, has now become manifest, and that through the mission of His Son. But the proposition is not here laid down in this wide generality. Certainly it is true that herein the love of God has been demonstrated in its broadest comprehensiveness (comp. John iii. 16, οὕτως ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς κ.τ.λ.), so that it might have been said that ἡ ἀγάπη, this very perfect love itself, was first manifested in the Son; but when we mark that the conclusion is, ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ, and that it runs in the beginning ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη ἐν ἡμῖν, we feel that both these circumscribe the comprehensiveness of the statement above: it is not that all the love of God generally was manifested in the sending of His Son; but the apostle would say that His love *towards us* was in this way approved. In order to obtain a more distinct idea, we must determine whether ἐν ἡμῖν belongs to ἀγάπη or to ἐφανερώθη, and how it is more particularly to be understood. The former might require the article before ἐν ἡμῖν; but that is not an absolute argument against it, for, though we find no instance in our apostle, yet we have one in Col. i. 4 of its absence in a similar or parallel case, ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. But since this construction must under any circumstances be harsher than the reference to ἐφανερώθη, we must needs prefer this latter.

But, this granted, even then the ἐν ἡμῖν may be variously

understood. The most obvious interpretation would be that of "among us;" but this is opposed by the form of the resumed thought in ver. 16, where it is *ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἔχει ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν*. If this were to be translated "among us," the whole phrase might easily be reduced to mean the love which God finds existing among us, that is, our love to Him. But this is rendered impossible by the preceding *πεπιστεύκαμεν*; for my love to God can be no object of faith to me. Therefore it must be that *ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἔχει ὁ Θεός*, ver. 16, defines the love which God has or feels; and *ἐν* can by no means be translated "among." But then, as *ἐν ἡμῖν* in ver. 16 and in ver. 9 stand or fall together, we cannot admit the interpretation "among" in our present verse also. It may be added that throughout the entire context *ἐν* never occurs in any other than its proper meaning of "in." What this apostle meant to express by the phrase *ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη ἐν ἡμῖν* may be best illustrated by comparing a similar Pauline passage. The *φανεροῦσθαι ἐν ἡμῖν*, that is, must be understood precisely in the same sense as St. Paul's *ἀποκαλύπτειν ἐν ἐμοί*, Gal. i. 16. This is something different from the simple *ἀποκαλύπτειν μοι*. St. Paul would make it emphatic that not only Jesus Christ had been revealed to him, and that he himself had been the receiver of the revelation, but that the revealed Christ had become an element of his own being and life. The expression presupposes a change which had passed within the apostle's own nature, a renewal of his being; without this we can form no conception of an *ἀποκαλύπτειν Ἰησοῦν ἐν αὐτῷ*. And here also the *ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν* implies much more than if the ending of it had been *ἡμῖν* simply. It means to say that not only had the love of God become known to us through the mission of His Son, but that in virtue of that mission it had fixed a permanent dwelling-place in us. The matter is so simple, both in phrase and meaning, that we could hardly wish it more so: if I say *ὁ Χριστὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*, I define the world as His dwelling; if I say *ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἡμῖν*, we ourselves then become His dwelling. Similarly, when it is said that *ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἡμῖν*,

we ourselves are the sphere in which the love of God has pitched its visible tent. The love of God, of which the verse preceding spoke, has become manifest, has been clearly made known to us; and that—for here is the second point connected with the former—in such a manner that it has made for itself a dwelling-place in us.

The correctness of this interpretation must be confirmed abundantly when it is shown how in that mission of the Son here spoken of this dwelling of love in us or that ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἡμῖν is verified. Let us look more closely at the declaration of the apostle. The revelation of the divine love of which St. John speaks did not consist in the fact that the Son *was manifested*, that He as ἀπαύγασμα τοῦ πατρός, in whom we see the Father, has through His life of love also *made known* the Father's love; nor will St. John make it emphatic, that the mission of the *Son*, or more strictly the *Son* sent, shows us in His person the divine love: that love is manifested in the *mission* of the Son. The former thought is true, indeed, but is not here impressed. That God sends τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, Him in whom He beholds Himself, who possesses the whole fulness of His own divine essence, yea, τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ, Him who alone has this place in deity,—sent Him, ἀπέσταλκεν, so that He has not that Son for Himself, for Himself loves Him not nor will enjoy Him, but sent Him to enter into the living agitation, the *sinful* agitation, of the human world, εἰς τὸν κόσμον, *that* human world which deserved not love but wrath,—this is the act of love which has brought the divine nature of love in God to full development, in which it ἐφανερώθη.

And now for the ἐν ἡμῖν. All other acts of God in history and nature manifest also His love, though not in the same degree as this; but when we discern in these the tokens of love, our knowledge is, so to speak, at second hand: of all this we might say only ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ φανεροῦται ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἡμῖν. But it is otherwise in the mission of the Son. This had for its purpose and result, ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ,—that is, we ourselves are to be transformed by it, the divine life is to be implanted in us, and

thus most assuredly the love of God is to be manifested *in* us because we are to be ourselves drawn into the fulness of this divine nature of love. In this, as we have seen, consisted the love of God generally, that He refers not His whole being to Himself, but to others, and in such a manner that He communicates it to others; He not only works with its energy *for* the world, but commits it into our own very being. And under both aspects His nature of love has been most perfectly revealed in the mission of His Son: by it He has surrendered the whole fulness of His divine nature, all that He has; and so surrendered it that He communicates it to us as a free gift; it is not merely a power working for us and in us, but the power energizing *within* us has become part of our own personality. Only when the Christ for us is really the Christ in us, do we exhaust the meaning of the word Θεὸς ἀγάπη.

Verse 10.

Ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν τὸν Θεὸν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἀπέστειλε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

The love of God has become in the mission of His Son a power of love working in us,—that is, it infers the thought that in this way only can we ourselves love in the manner and after the standard of the ἐντολὴ καινή (comp. ch. ii. 8): this is the idea of the ninth verse, which the tenth more fully expands. It begins with ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη. This cannot mean the love of God, for an αὐτοῦ would in that case hardly have been left out; rather the subject of the loving must be derived from the following clause with ὅτι. That, however, contains two of them, ἡμεῖς and Θεός, and thus we must take the ἀγάπη quite generally, as it might be plainly expressed in the infinitive expression "loving." The topic is the nature of love generally, all love which may be found in God or man: neither the love of God to us alone, nor our love to God alone. The ἐν τούτῳ ἐστίν suggests an unfolding of the *nature* of love; "it consists in this, that;" the ὅτι ἠγαπήσαμεν, ὅτι ἀπέστειλεν point through the very tense up to the causality of

love, the principle of its origination. The two, however, are in fact inseparably united. This let us try to make clear by an example. Concerning the publicans, whom the Lord in Matt. v. 46 introduces, the very converse of the proposition before us might have been said, *ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν τελωνῶν, οὐχ ὅτι ἐμὲ ἠγάπησαν ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐγὼ αὐτοὺς ἠγάπησα.* The ground of their love to me lies not in them, but in me; if I cease to love them, they cease to love me; thus their love to me is essentially no other than my love to them. Therefore, as the publican's love to me consists of or may be resolved into my love to him, the apostle says here that all loving on earth and in heaven has its originating cause and consists (thus are the two forms of the proposition to be united) in God's loving. All human loving is a flame from the divine Flame, having in itself no independent existence: "I love" means no other than that the divine love has become in me an overmastering and all-pervading power of life. Accordingly, it is not the apostle's design here to make prominent the priority of the divine love, to exhibit it as *causa sui*, as we find it in Rom. v. 8. Had that been his intention, to show that love in us has been enkindled by an anticipation on the part of God, he would have used the perfect instead of the aorist, in order to express the finished action and expression of it. But the explanation we have given is in precise harmony with the aorist. The historical fact of the mission of the Son *is* love: it is the demonstration and substance of divine love, and it is the germ and ground and substance of our love. If we introduce the priority of the divine love, that it is the divine manner of love to take precedence and anticipate, and that we must follow and copy it, we derange the whole thought of the apostle. The *πρῶτος*, which the Vulgate interpolates here, and which actually occurs in ch. iv. 19, would on such a supposition not have been wanting. To repeat what we have said: the apostle does not say that God loves first, and we then in the second order; true as that is, he says something more comprehensive and much higher, including the former, to wit, that the divine love dwells in us. And this must regu-

late our view of the standard aimed at in the last words of the clause, *ἀπέστειλε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.* They do not, like similar words in Rom. v. 8, *ὅτι ἔτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν,* indicate the *anticipating* love of God; but they point to the means by which God has made us capable of being the recipients and representatives of His love. They are altogether parallel, therefore, with the concluding words of the previous verse, *ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ,* and lay down only the negative condition for the positive awakening of a new life.

Verse 11.

Ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ Θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν.

From ver. 8 till now the apostle has been exhibiting how the love to the brethren, which he enforces, comes to reality in us; purely on the ground of a divine operation. God is love, and has through the central act of the mission of His Son established this His love as an efficient power in us. Now in ver. 11 comes forward the application: the exhortation to suffer the germ thus deposited in us to come to its full development. The words as they run show in the most beautiful manner the accuracy of the above explanation of the previous verses. For, if the current exposition were true, according to which the anticipating love of God is argument to us that we all should love our brethren in the same anticipating manner, the conclusion of the proposition ought to have the *οὕτως* of its beginning repeated; for then the apostle would not be commending brotherly love in general, but a definite kind of brotherly love (*οὕτως*). But the apostle has not inserted this, and we must seek another explanation. The emphasis lies upon the *ὀφείλομεν*: it is explained that, in virtue of the mission of the Son of God, love *ἐν ἡμῖν* is manifested, that is, is implanted in us as an energizing power. Let then your light shine, trade with the pound given, is the apostle's exhortation. This trading with the pound, the evidencing of brotherly love, is your most solemn duty: every gift,

like that of the infusion of divine love, makes us responsible for its use. And now the interpretation of the *οὕτως* in the beginning suggests itself at once: it is our duty if God has so loved us: how? in that He hath revealed His love *ἐν ἡμῖν*, implanted the germ of it in our hearts. The *ἀγαπητοί*, which introduces the verse, resumes that of ver. 7: the former one was only the foundation for this superstructure of exhortation. And, when he has come to this, the apostle brings it home to his readers by an affectionate appeal to the heart of each.

VERSE 12.

Θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται· ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ τετελειωμένη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν.

The following verse brings in the close of the discussion: attributing to brotherly love the *μένειν ἐν Θεῷ*. It is true that, on the first glance, the words *Θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται* seem to stand in the text without any mediating link. The first thing we have to ask is, whether the emphasis rests on the *Θεόν* or on the *τεθέαται*. The arrangement suggests the former. In that case we should have an antithesis between God as the invisible and the brother as seen; but then there would arise only one sense, that we could love the unseen God only in our brethren, and that this brotherly love would have the same blessed result (*μένειν ἐν ἡμῖν*) as if we could have seen God. But where do we find in the Bible the faintest trace of the thought that we can love God only in our brethren? Not indeed in ver. 20, where the subject is only the *confirmation* of brotherly love. Love in its direction and impulse takes no account of the visibility or invisibility of the object beloved. It has indeed the tendency to desire sight of the object; but that is by no means necessary to its existence or strength. Moreover, if the apostle had wished to speak of the contrast between loving the invisible God and the visible brethren, of the ease or the difficulty of loving the unseen and the seen, he might have by one word indicated that contrast.

Thus we are driven to the second possibility, that of laying the stress on the τεθέαται. The meaning then is, that no man hath indeed seen God; any visible fellowship with Him is out of the question; but a spiritual fellowship of another kind is possible, and becomes actual if we love the brethren. It is plain that this meaning is unexceptionably suitable; and, for the rest, it may be easily explained why, notwithstanding the emphasis, the object comes before the verb. For, to look closely, while it is true that *inside* the verse itself, as we have just seen, there is an antithesis between the invisibility of God and the spiritual union with Him which is nevertheless necessary, it is still true that the verse as a *whole* lays the stress on that fellowship with *God* into which we through love of the brethren enter, and of which ver. 11 had spoken. Hence the Θεόν, as the point around which the whole revolves, is placed at the outset. That, instead of the direct phrase οὐ δυνάμεθα θεᾶσθαι τὸν Θεόν, the more limited οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται is used, rests on the thought that we certainly need not hope to attain what has been inaccessible to all before us. The promise which is here in a certain sense given to brotherly love as the equivalent for not being able to see God, is at a first glance twofold: first, that God will abide in us; secondly, that ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ τετελειωμένη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν. But let us ascertain whether these two are really distinct. That would be the case only if ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ meant "our love to God." Then the two clauses would issue in what we commonly find distinguished as ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ. But this translation is impossible. For, throughout the section we have heard of our love to our neighbour, but never once of our love to God; and this latter idea would be a new one entering without any bond of connection, and furthermore at the close of the section. But it is equally out of the question to translate ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ of the love of God to us; for it would be quite out of harmony with the tenor of a section which exhibits our love as the reflection and effluence of divine love to turn round and inversely represent the divine love as the result of our love to the brethren. There

remains only, therefore, the solution which we found it needful to adopt in ch. ii. 5,—that is, to exclude from the expression every objective or subjective reference of the ἀγάπη, and to take it simply as the love which God has, and which He is. Brotherly love shows that love which is in God is also in us: a thought which obviously is the most striking conclusion for the whole discussion of the section before us.

Moreover, the apostle inserts a τετελειωμένη, an idea which from this point plays a conspicuous part; compare ver. 17 and ver. 18 (*bis*). By this last fact we may note at once that the writer is approaching the end of his discussion. Thus also is explained the relation between the two members of the leading clause, ὁ Θεὸς μένει ἐν ἡμῖν and ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ κ.τ.λ. In the latter the emphasis lies on τετελειωμένη, and the two are related as general to particular: that God abideth in us, on this or that condition or supposition, the apostle had more than once said; but here at the end he adds expressly, that the divine nature of love in its whole fulness and glory takes up its dwelling in us. This is the highest perfection in God, that His love neither excludes any nor ever suffers interruption; and this is therefore the image and ideal for love among Christians, so that all individuals should love one another without exception (ἀλλήλους), and that with uninterrupted energy (the present ἀγαπῶμεν).

Verses 13–16.

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν. Καὶ ἡμεῖς τεθεάμεθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν, ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέσταλκε τὸν υἱὸν σωτῆρα τοῦ κόσμου. Ὃς ἂν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Θεῷ. Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ἣν ἔχει ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν. ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστί, καὶ ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, ἐν τῷ Θεῷ μένει, καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

It has been shown already that the following four verses give a recapitulation: ver. 13 summing up the substance

of the whole section ch. iv. 1–12, parallel with ch. iii. 24, while the two particular sub-sections, vers. 1–6 and vers. 7–12, are taken up again by vers. 14–16. But it will be plain, on the other hand, if we examine carefully, that we have by no means a mere *resumé;* though what is found to be added may be explained by the consideration that the apostle is here in the act of gathering up the threads of his whole discussion from ch. ii. 28 downwards. Hence at the very beginning of ver. 13 we have the double expression ἐν αὐτῷ μένωμεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, while in the last section, and in the theme of ch. iii. 24 corresponding to it, only the latter part of it comes forward. But if it is remembered that the last section is only the substructure or pendant of the third chapter, which treats of our abiding in God, we shall perceive how fitly the apostle, in his recapitulation here, combines the two thoughts, and that in each of the three resuming clauses. Even the γινώσκειν enters here again very appropriately; for the whole of the second part of the Epistle treats of no other than the tokens by which the sonship of Christians may be discerned.

The thing here adduced is ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν: the same words as in ch. iii. 24. That this is in fact the matter contained in vers. 1–12 can, after the exposition we have given, be no longer questionable. For, to set out from the last sub-section, vers. 7–12, where it is said that all human loving rests upon the infusion of the divine fire of love, what does that mean but that it rests upon the Holy Spirit? And in vers. 1–6 the subject is expressly the confessing of the God-man as a sign of possessing the Holy Ghost. What ver. 14 brings in as new, as also in ver. 16, are the two introductory clauses each emphasized by καὶ ἡμεῖς. That these aim to exhibit the contents of the section as the experience of Christian life, is clear enough; but it is not so evident to what end the experience is here introduced. Is it alleged as the guarantee of the truth of what St. John had said, just as the apostles collectively, and St. John in particular, elsewhere adduce the experience of Christ's resurrection as the demonstration of the truth? But that would suit only the

first καὶ ἡμεῖς, and not the second; for, as to the love which God has in me, my faith in that love gives me no certain assurance, since it might be an erroneous faith. Nor does there seem any absolute necessity for a pledge of the truth of the assurance, ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη. Rather are the clauses καὶ ἡμεῖς κ.τ.λ. necessary, and absolutely necessary, to show that the theme of ch. iii. 24, iv. 13 has been demonstrated. We read there, δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος, which expresses an experience that the readers had known. Now in the development of ch. iv. 1–12 nothing is said of this actual gift and experience; only abstract and no concrete relations are treated of: he who confesses Jesus has the Holy Ghost; he in whom the love of God is manifested must love the brethren. Whether this was actually the case with the readers is certainly not said here; if, therefore, the δέδωκεν ἡμῖν was really to be established, there must be at least a single word to express the evidence of this fact. Now that we find in the clauses before us: confession of Jesus is necessary, and we have it; love is necessary, and it is found in us,—therefore we have received the Holy Ghost.

Granted that we have now come to a general understanding as to our verses, we are far from understanding them yet in detail. The first question is, to whom the ἡμεῖς emphatically standing at the outset refers. Primarily, it appears, to the apostles; for in ch. i. 1 these are made prominent as θεασάμενοι and μαρτυροῦντες; and, even if we took the θεᾶσθαι in a figurative sense, yet the μαρτυρεῖν demands ever a personal eye-witness. Equally clear is it that the second καὶ ἡμεῖς refers to the whole congregation inclusive of the apostles; for what would be the meaning of saying that the apostle or the apostles had known by living experience of faith the divine love ruling within them? Certainly the object with St. John is not to show that he had received the Holy Ghost, but that all, even the whole church, had received Him. But here again there is a difficulty; as it seems to be asserted that the first καὶ ἡμεῖς refers to the apostles without including the church, while the second refers to both: in each case the

καὶ ἡμεῖς is so emphatic, and they are both put in the beginning as so manifestly corresponding to each other, that it is almost matter of necessity to take them in the same meaning. To this must be added, that even in ver. 14, and equally in ver. 15, as we have perceived also in ver. 16, the apostle aims not to show that *he* has the Spirit, but that the church has: that is, the emphasis cannot rest on the θεωρία of the apostles, but only upon the ὁμολογία (ver. 15) of the congregation. The former is brought forward only for the sake of the latter. Our confession of Jesus as the Son of God rests indeed in the first instance on the μαρτυρία of the apostles, their μαρτυρία again on their being eye-witnesses: by this they became μάρτυρες, not merely announcers, but trustworthy announcers, of the truth. Thus, by means of their testimony we obtain a participation in what they had first personally beheld and spiritually apprehended. This observation makes it plain that the two καὶ ἡμεῖς are perfectly parallel, and how they are so. For, in the first, the apostles are not regarded in contradistinction to the church, but as the principle of the church's ὁμολογία; their θεᾶσθαι καὶ μαρτυρεῖν was the ground and essence of that confession; in their personal experience concerning the mission of the Son of God, the experience of the church was as it were involved. Thus, as the καὶ ἡμεῖς in ver. 16 refers to the apostles *and* the church, so *essentially* it is in ver. 14, although that verse formally embraces the apostles alone. So the meaning of vers. 14, 15 is: we have the Holy Ghost; for we have the token of this, the confession of the mission of the Son as Saviour of the world,[1] on the ground of apostolical testimony; and consequently we have perfect mutual fellowship with God. As if he would make evident at once the reciprocity of the connection between God and

[1] It must not be unnoted that St. John has the expression σωτήρ only twice (John iv. 42, in the mouth of the Samaritans), but each time with the addition τοῦ κόσμου. Elsewhere the word occurs always as connected with ἡμῶν (that is, Christians) or absolutely; St. Paul alone speaks of the Father once as σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων (1 Tim. iv. 10). Even in this otherwise insignificant peculiarity St. John shows his predominant tendency to give prominence to the universality of the divine purpose of redemption.

man, the apostle changes the arrangement of the words in vers. 13, 15, 16: now the *μένομεν ἐν αὐτῷ* comes first, now the *αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν*. The historical fact of the manifestation of Christ, belonging to the domain of the visible world, could be established only by the experience of testimony; the internal fact, on the contrary, of the love of God ruling in us can only be inwardly experienced: hence here the *ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν*.

That which is known and believed is love, the love *ἣν ἔχει ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν*. The expression has already been dealt with on ver. 9: it is the divine love, which is in God, but which He, by virtue of the mission of His Son, implants in our hearts, so that it now is also *ἐν ἡμῖν*. It must first be known and then believed: for I can believe in the biblical sense, that is, enter, with all the soul and perfect trust, only into that the existence of which I know. So St. John says: we have known, it has become plain to us, that divine love has taken up its dwelling in us; and, after we came to know this, we have also believingly apprehended it. Let it not be wondered at that we are said to believe in what is after all *ἐν ἡμῖν*. As certainly as I must believe in the power of God which is mighty in the weak,—this, however, being in myself,—so certainly must I believe in the love of God which abides in me. Without such faith neither can that power nor this love approve itself mighty within me. The following clause, *ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν*, is quite necessary for the conclusion that we, in virtue of this love, have perfect fellowship with God. It might, indeed, be conceived that he who loves, he who has the divine love in himself, may in some degree enter into communion with God; but not on that account into a full and complete fellowship. This argument, however, is very plain, when it is said that God is love, and only love, and altogether love. For, if the whole nature of God is love, it follows that he who has this love participates in the whole nature of God; he who possesses the love of God has God entire. This we may establish also in other ways. If the apostle's proposition, that by means of love we have absolute fellowship with God, is correct, it may

equally be averred that we also have everything else which may be said concerning Him: for instance, the light-nature of God may assuredly become the portion of him who loves. This also is quite true; for we have seen in ver. 8 that love in its nature is diffusion of good, this latter being presupposed; and, as the love of God presupposes His light-nature, so does loving on our part presuppose that we participate in this nature of light. Similarly, it follows from the declaration that both the confession of Christ and the love of the brethren exhibit full and complete fellowship with God, that both these are perfectly involved in each other. And so indeed it is. For the confession of Christ rests, according to the exposition in vers. 1–6, on the impartation of the Divine Spirit, or, more strictly, of the Spirit of the incarnate Son of God; and love rests upon the communication of the same Spirit,—that is, as He is the Spirit of love. Confession and love are therefore only the outbeamings of one and the selfsame Spirit; each of the two pledges the perfect unity with God. Neither is a true avowal of Christ possible without brotherly love, nor is this latter possible without the former; either both are wanting or both are present: at least, that is, in their germ.

Let us now look at the position of the track in which we now find ourselves. The theme of this division of the Epistle was said to be, in ch. ii. 28 seq., *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα παῤῥησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.* This parrhesia, according to ver. 29, was to spring from the consciousness of divine birth, or being born out of God, and this consciousness to rest upon the sign of works. The concluding proposition in ver. 29, *πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται,* is thus the argument of proof for the main proposition in ver. 28. This last-adduced proposition is now developed in two directions: first, in ch. iii., that he who is born of God *must* practise righteousness; secondly, in ch. iv., that this practice of righteousness (especially brotherly love) can only proceed from a divine new birth. For, as ch. iv. expounds, all *νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον,* and thus all opposition to sin, as also all love, depends

upon the infusion of the Divine Spirit. Thus we may say that in ch. iii. it is demonstrated *ὅτι ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ποιεῖ*; in ch. iv., *ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται*. Finally, it is shown, especially in the *resumé* of vers. 13–16, how, in this communication of the Holy Ghost, that *μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ* comes to perfection which was spoken of in ch. ii. 28. It remains now that the apostle should disentangle the knot he created, by showing that thus the *παῤῥησία* is attained in the final judgment. He does this in the following verses. They are the *quod erat demonstrandum*.

VERSE 17.

Ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ' ἡμῶν, ἵνα παῤῥησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, ὅτι καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστι, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμὲν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ.

But this ver. 17 has its difficulties, by no means insignificant. First, as to the direct meaning of the particles *ἐν τούτῳ, ἵνα, ὅτι*. The *ἐν τούτῳ* which leads off in the verse may refer either to what follows or to what precedes. In the former case it must receive its specification of contents by a clause in the sequel; and this it might first receive through the sentence with *ἵνα*, which must in that case have its telic meaning modified, or, secondly, through that with *ὅτι*. This latter, however, is rendered intolerable by the extremely hard trajection which it would assume. How could the apostle have in such a way rent asunder the *ἐν τούτῳ ὅτι* so strictly united? Much better than that would it be to accept the former, which makes the clause with *ἵνα* the substance or matter that the *ἐν τούτῳ* refers to. This would follow the analogy of ch. iii. 11, 23, where the means through which love is brought to perfection are at the same time the end to be attained. We should have then presented to us two thoughts interpenetrating each other: the confidence as to the end is the highest consummation of actual love; but it is at the same time the goal to which that love aspires, and at which it aims. But with regard to this we must observe, in the first place, that St. John, while he uses the combination *αὕτη ἵνα, τοῦτο ἵνα, ταῦτα ἵνα*, gives

us no other example than this of *ἐν τούτῳ ἵνα*: John xv. 8 has it, but it is obvious that the sense there decidedly requires the *ἐν τούτῳ* to be referred to what precedes. Again, we certainly find the combination *ἐν τούτῳ ὅτι . . . ἐάν*, ch. ii. 3, but never once that of *ἐν τούτῳ ἵνα ὅτι*. All this of course does not prove that St. John could not have written thus. Proof, however, that he did not, may be gathered from the connection of the passage. If we refer *ἐν τούτῳ* to what follows,—that is, to the clause with *ἵνα*, —we absolutely take away the bridge between what has gone before and the new section. The apostle had just been saying (ver. 12), that in brotherly love *ἡ ἀγάπη τετελειωμένη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν*; again, he here suddenly announces that it is perfected in parrhesia or assurance: but as to how these two are related he suggests not a word of explanation. Again, if we translate it to the effect that love is fulfilled in this, that we have confidence in the day of judgment, we obviously defer its perfection to the future; but how does that accord with the fundamental *ἐσμὲν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ*?

Now we escape from all these difficulties, and place our passage where it both gives and receives light, if we refer the *ἐν τούτῳ* to what precedes, following examples which abound in St. John; compare, for example, ch. ii. 6, John iv. 37, xv. 8, xvi. 30. What *ἐν τούτῳ* means is then the *μένειν ἐν Θεῷ καὶ Θεὸν ἐν ἡμῖν* of ver. 16,—that is, the "this" points to the conclusion of the entire preceding development of the thought. The first half of our verse is therefore to be translated to this effect: in the reciprocal relation of fellowship betwixt God and us, love is—*μεθ' ἡμῶν* may wait awhile for its examination—perfected, to the end that—the goal which this earthly perfection arrives at—we may have confidence in the day of judgment. This verse is thus, in fact, the precise close or pendant of that beginning in ch. ii. 28: there we have *μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, ἔχωμεν παῤῥησίαν*; here, by the help of *ἐν τούτῳ*, we have again the abiding in God corresponding with that; to the *φανερωθῇ* there the *ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως* answers here; while the *ἔχειν παῤῥησίαν* is common to the

two passages in the very letter, and, similarly, the reference to the end in the μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ. But, as befits the closing idea of a section, the abiding in God is no longer here an exhortation as in ch. ii. 28, but something assumed already to exist as a consummated reality (ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται). The words τετελείωται. ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ' ἡμῶν are new in this passage; they are wanting in ch. ii. 28; in them lies the whole argument *in nuce* which the apostle has been conducting. Why is the μένων ἐν Θεῷ full of confidence and joy? Answer: because this μένειν contains in itself the perfecting of love, and thus of itself renders possible and actually produces a free uplifting of the eyes and a free opening of the mouth even in the presence of God the Judge of all.

That which is perfected, which has reached perfection, is love. For the μεθ' ἡμῶν which follows must not be combined with the ἀγάπη: not only on account of the absence of the article, but, as we have seen in the similar combination of ver. 9, on account of the sense. What can ἀγάπη μεθ' ἡμῶν be supposed to mean? Love between us,—that is, God and men? But it need not be again observed that God and men cannot be conjoined by ἡμεῖς. Is it our own mutual love? That would require the ἀλλήλων. Or is it the love, *scilicet*, of God with us,—that is, again, the relation of love between God and men? Apart from the harshness of such a contorted sentence, we should then expect, of necessity, ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ. The only thing possible, and that which is of itself the most probable, is to take ἀγάπη in the same meaning which, since ver. 9, has been demanded: as the divine love, the love which God has, and which He sends down into the spirit of man. The μεθ' ἡμῶν is to be connected with the verb,—that is, with the τετελείωται,—and testifies that the love among Christians, within the church, has reached this perfection: the apostle does not, indeed, write to any individuals as individuals, but to the members of the congregation as such. In the midst of the church alone, but certainly there, is to be found such a consummation of love, such a perfection of fellowship with God. Two things are inseparably bound up in the

text. The infusion of divine love in the heart of man establishes the principle of this fellowship; the development of this principle or germ in continued brotherly love brings this germinal fellowship with God to its perfection; and this perfected fellowship with Him is again the perfecting of love. Communion with God and love are reciprocal ideas; they require each other, and are each the other's condition; and the growth of the one carries with it ever the growth of the other.

It being now clear in general, that perfected love must produce confidence or parrhesia in the day of judgment, the apostle proceeds to unfold this connection between the two in detail; first setting out with the clause which has its argument of proof in the ὅτι. The passage runs, καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστι, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ. The words are obscure. Their explanation must start from the sure basis that the concluding words ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ cannot refer to both parts of the comparison, but only to the latter part. Otherwise, that is, the ἐστί would have been found altogether absent; and, moreover, we cannot see then how either generally or in the present connection it can be asserted that Christ still is (for the ἐστίν is certainly not equivalent to ἦν) in this world in the same manner as we are. Precisely the converse of this is the truth. Thus the apostle will affirm, as we gather at once, an equality between Christ as He now is, that is, the glorified Christ, or as He has ever been and still is—this is also possible—the Son of God, and us in our condition below not yet made perfect. But how may we now more precisely apprehend the *tertium comparationis?* The expression itself is so general, that it can be understood only from the whole system of the apostle's thinking, and not from itself alone. Now, as there is hardly an important phrase in the whole Epistle which does not rest upon the Gospel, and as, in particular, the matter of the thought in the section just studied, ver. 9 seq., is based upon John iii. 16, so we shall find it in the present passage. The explanatory text in the Gospel is John xvii. 21 seq.; the Lord declares there that He is no more in the world, but that the disciples are in

the world,—the same antithesis which we have now before us,—and He asks the Father, who had hitherto kept them in fellowship with Him, to keep them still, and with them all who should believe on Him through their ministry: not taking them out of the world, but so ordering it that (ver. 21) *καθὼς σὺ πάτερ ἐν ἐμοὶ κἀγὼ ἐν σοὶ, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ἓν ὦσιν.* Compare, further, ver. 26, *ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἠγάπησάς με ἐν αὐτοῖς ᾖ κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς*, and ver. 23, *κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί.* These passages throw on our present one a clear and steady light: as Christ is one with the Father, in inseparable fellowship with Him, so we are to be indissolubly united with Him, although we are still in this world and while we are still in this world. And this takes place, as in our passage through the *τελείωσις* of the *ἀγάπη*, so according to John xvii. 26 through the love wherewith God loves Christ dwelling in us. In this perfect fellowship with the Father consisted the whole life, essence, and being of the Lord upon earth, and in that it exists from everlasting to everlasting: hence the absolute *καθώς ἐστιν.* And as in this fellowship with God (*ἐν τούτῳ*) our Lord becomes *τετελειωμένη*, so in virtue of the same the Lord's love also was perfected (*τελειωθεὶς ἐγένετο*, Heb. v. 9). As He in Gethsemane subordinated all His own thinking, feeling, and willing to that of the Father, as thereby His *μένειν ἐν τῷ Θεῷ* had reached its highest degree, thereby was His own love and His work of love brought to perfection; thus was the *ἀγάπη εἰς τέλος*, which was at the same time the *τετελειωμένη ἀγάπη*, conquered and won by Him. Thus the apostle's train of thought in our passage is this: If we have perfect fellowship with God (*ἐν τούτῳ*), then have we already upon earth become like, or conformed to, the being and nature of Christ; and when the day of judgment, that is, the day of His manifestation (ch. ii. 28), comes, we shall on the ground of this conformity freely and openly look Him in the face (*παῤῥησίαν ἔχομεν*). Fellowship with God is at the same time the perfected indwelling of the divine love in us; both these, however, make us like Christ; according to this conformity to Him shall we be finally

judged; and if we have it, we have also confidence at the last day.

Let it be further observed how affectingly our verse, thus understood, concurs and coincides with ch. iii. 1-4. There it was said that full and entire conformity to Christ, which we saw to be comprehended in the idea of brotherhood, lay before us still as the issue of the judgment; but that in order to attain it (ver. 3) we must have attained even here another kind of likeness or equality to Him—we must have become *ἁγνοί* like Him. Then the following exposition showed that this *ἁγνεία* consists in righteousness and love, which on their part also again depended on the infusion of the Divine Spirit. Comprehending all in one, we must abide in God and He in us. Now the apostle returns back to the beginning: this fellowship with God, this perfected love in us, is the likeness to Christ above indicated as necessary in the judgment; in virtue of it we pass through the terrors of the judgment unappalled, and then press onward to that higher thing, the *καλὸς βαθμός* of perfect equality with Christ. In the *ἀγάπη τετελειωμένη* we have attained all that we may hope to attain *ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ*; if, then, we have entered through the *ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως* into the *αἰὼν μέλλων*, the further development will not be found in arrear: *φανερωθήσεται τί ἐσόμεθα.*

Verse 18.

Φόβος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, ἀλλ' ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον, ὅτι ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει· ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τετελείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ.

The apostle's exposition in ver. 17 has shown that we have in the *ἀγάπη τετελειωμένη*, which involves in it the *μένειν ἐν Θεῷ*, the parrhesia, because we are thus conformed to Christ the standard of the judgment. But he has now another method of exhibiting the connection between love and confidence, that is, by reference to the nature of love itself. To the parrhesia, he says, fear is utterly opposed, as this is incompatible with love: where love is, there is not fear, but confidence. This is generally the substance of ver. 18. That confidence and fear are opposed is a pre-

supposition of the verse which is not further demonstrated; the emphasis rests upon the evidence that fear and love are not reconcilable with each other. "Fear is not *in* love:" love is the feeling of internal union with another, the opening out my person to that other; fear is the sense of wanting harmony, and therefore the separation and shutting up of my person as it respects him. Love springs from the feeling that God is for us; fear, from the feeling that He is against us. Thus it is plain that the two ideas exclude each other. Yea, so little do they agree together, that, on the contrary (ἀλλά), love, where it exists, has the power and tendency to drive out fear. But certainly it can do that only where it is τελεία, that is, penetrates and fills the whole life and being of man.

That love must cast out fear, however, appears from this (ὅτι), that fear κόλασιν ἔχει. For the explanation of this idea we are directed to Matt. xxv. 46. There it is said that the ungodly ἀπελεύσονται εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. We therefore perceive that κόλασις is the punishment, the condemnation itself, not merely the feeling of it; the objective condition, not the subjective sense of it or pain. As this is required by the verb ἀπέρχεσθαι εἰς itself, so still more is it demanded by the antithesis to ζωὴ αἰώνιος: as it would be highly forced to speak of going away or entering into a feeling, so the state of eternal life is not the description of a subjective feeling, but of a condition appointed. Similarly, in our passage κόλασις cannot be understood of a mere painful feeling; for it was surely not necessary to emphasize that fear is in itself a sentiment of distress. Rather, the pregnant thought of St. John is this, that in fear, which has been shown to be fear of punishment, the punishment itself is already included and involved. If we remember the saying of the Gospel, that he who believeth not is condemned already; that the condemnation consists simply in this, that light shineth into the darkness and declares it to be darkness,—it will appear plain that in St. John's thought condemnation is consummate in separation from God. Now, as we have seen that fear has its ground in

the feeling of being sundered from God, while this separation from Him is in St. John's doctrine already the state of judgment or condemnation, it is evident that fear contains in itself the element of judgment: *φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει.* The last clause of ver. 18, which is linked by δέ, does not intend to introduce the antithesis of *ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει*, that is, does not carry further the argument brought in by *ὅτι*, but contains the inverse of the clause *ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον.* It is perfectly clear that St. John might have exhibited this proposition, that where fear is, love cannot be perfected, as the conclusion of the first clause itself; but it is clear, at the same time, that the form of the antithesis is justified as it is, and is more appropriate to the Johannaean *genus dicendi.*

Thus, then, the proposition which was laid down as a theme in ch. ii. 28 has been argued out on all sides and justified; while, at the same time, the end has been reached which St. John, according to ch. i. 4, set before himself in this Epistle, that the Christian church should attain the perfection of that joy, which, according to ch. i. 13, consists in fellowship with God and with the brethren. For the *τετελειωμένη* or *πεπληρωμένη χάρα* is nothing but the *παῤῥησία*, the feeling of perfect unity and harmony with God, which will approve itself even before the rigours of the final judgment. How, in fact, this consummate joy rests upon the two things which ch. i. 3 lays down, communion with God and communion with the brethren, it has been St. John's object throughout the whole Epistle to show. Every section of it is based upon this double relation. But there is one thing yet wanting that had to be evinced; and that St. John introduces supernumerarily in the paragraph from ch. iv. 19 to ch. v. 5: the exposition, namely, how these two aspects, which had been hitherto viewed always as co-ordinate, the relation to God and the relation to the brethren, form an internal and indissoluble organic unity, so that neither of them can be conceived without the other. Our relation to God has been presented by the apostle under various phrases: sometimes in act, as *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην* positively, and negatively as *νικᾶν*

τὸν κόσμον; sometimes as the energizing potency lying at the root of the act, the confession to Christ. In this last section, which is to exhibit the unity of all these aspects by the ἀγαπᾶν τὸν ἀδελφόν, we accordingly find all these expressions gathered up again: the actual side by τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς, ch. v. 2 seq., as also by νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον, ch. v. 4, 5; the principle by πιστεύειν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χρίστος. In what preceded, the relation to God has been based upon the acknowledgment of the mission of the Son of God; the relation to the brethren upon the divine love infused into us. In order now to show the internal unity of the two relations, the apostle begins by deriving *both* first from the idea of love, and then from that of faith in the God-man. The former occupies ch. iv. 19–21, the latter ch. v. 1 seq.

VERSE 19.

Ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν, ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς.

The nineteenth verse resumes what was said in ch. iv. 8 seq. From this it at once follows that we must not read ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν αὐτόν, but only ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν. Here primarily love is demanded in its universality: that we generally must love follows from the anticipating love of God; that this our love must have two directions, towards God and towards the brethren, is then explained in what follows. Similarly, it is plain from the point of view in which we have sought to place what follows, that ἀγαπῶμεν is not in the indicative, but in the conjunctive. The sense is: I have told you that we, as the result of the love of God manifested to us, must ourselves also love.

VERSE 20.

Ἐάν τις εἴπῃ, Ὅτι ἀγαπῶ τὸν Θεόν, καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῇ, ψεύστης ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν ἑώρακε, τὸν Θεὸν ὃν οὐχ ἑώρακε πῶς δύναται ἀγαπᾶν;

It is now unfolded that the love of God without the love of the brethren is a thing impossible. Of love to God not a word had been hitherto said; only of the divine love

which is infused into us, and which must approve itself as brotherly love. That we must love God enters here as a new thought, which, however, is so self-understood that it is introduced simply as a matter taken for granted. The emphasis lies only on the evidence that the love of God is not conceivable without love of our brother. The form of the exposition has been made familiar to us by ch. i. and ii.: here we have *ἐάν τις εἴπῃ*, there it was *ἐὰν εἴπωμεν* or *ὁ λέγων*; we may compare also the *ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις* of Jas. ii. 15, 1 Cor. xv. 35; only that in this last passage we have objections introduced, while here there is no theoretical denial of the apostolical doctrine, but a delusive assertion of being in the true state. Similarly the *ψεύστης ἐστίν* has been familiarized by the first division of the Epistle, and this severe sentence the apostle justifies by the clause with *γάρ*.

The question now arises, how far the invisibility of God as such, for on it the stress is evidently laid, demonstrates that we cannot love Him without loving the brethren. It is not to be thought that the apostle should mean to deny the possibility of loving generally what is invisible. This would not only contradict our experience that we are capable of loving with all our hearts persons whom we have never seen, but the consciousness of all true Christians who know that they love God notwithstanding that He is unseen. If it be said that we at least *know* something of the men whom we love without having seen them, and that this knowledge is the ground of the love, then we say in reply that such a knowledge of God also we may have in the fullest degree. The error of this explanation lies here, that *πῶς* is taken too hastily as rhetorically used; so that the clause is made to express the simple affirmation *οὐ δύναται κ.τ.λ.*, as, indeed, some codices have actually substituted this *οὐ*. But the fact is that the *πῶς* has the emphasis in the sentence. "*In what way* can he love God who loves not his brother?" Obviously the love of which St. John speaks is the same of which he had said in ch. iii. 18, that it consists not in words, but *ἐν ἔργῳ*. Love in mere words is no love; all genuine love

presses to its demonstration in act. But the act requires, as we have been reminded in another connection, a material on which it may exert itself. God, as in His nature and being withdrawn from visibility, does not present in Himself absolutely such a material on which we may work; but He has given Himself a body, *si verbis audacia detur*, in man who is made after His image: that is then the only material on which my love to God may show its energy and reality. If I scorn that, πῶς, in what other way, in what other sense, can I then love God, *scilicet*, ἐν ἔργῳ ? But all this has not done full justice to the tense ἑώρακε; if the matter were of visibility or invisibility in general, we should expect rather the present, or simply ὁρᾶν δύναται. But the point of view from which all is regarded indicates the right sense: if the matter here is the demonstration of love in any way whatever (πῶς), it is clear that I can approve my love to my brother only if I know the precise point in which he needs it; in short, love requires for its exhibition a specific opportunity. Hence I must *have seen*, if he is to present such an opportunity to me; without having seen him, I cannot approve my love to him in act; whence naturally the ὁρᾶν is to be taken in so wide a sense that the hearing about him is involved in it also. Such occasion for the expression of love, however, such stimulant to testify love to God as if to His own person, is not possible without the medium of the brethren. My deeds of charity to my neighbour may indeed and must spring from love to God; but there are no means (πῶς) of testifying our love to Him in act, to Him as invisible, or to Him in and for Himself, without such a mediating element.

VERSE 21.

Καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχομεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν Θεὸν, ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

There is nevertheless one way, it might be thought, of loving God directly, that, namely, of keeping His commandments—the way of obedience. But ver. 21 explains that this method of loving God ἐν ἔργῳ is not really a second one; for it is God's express commandment that

we love the brethren. Certainly the words do not indicate that this is the only commandment which we have received; for if the apostle says *ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχομεν*, that does not hinder us from supposing that, besides the one in question, we have many others. But yet, strictly speaking, the precept of brotherly love is actually the *πλήρωμα νόμου*. If, for example, we would reckon the *νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον*, the suppression of self, the subjection of pride, and so forth, as other commandments, yet it is plain that every victory over the evil is utterly impossible save through the might of the one principle opposed to them all, that of love. If love consists in this, that I refer my life absolutely not to myself, but altogether to others, then there can be no other commandment like unto this; and this laying down or throwing away of our own life, as Christ terms it, is possible as an act only in relation to man, not in relation to God: or it is possible as towards God only through the mediation of brotherly love. A passage literally expressing the commandment here given we certainly nowhere find. Yet we need not fall back upon the fundamental text of the Old Testament, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself;" the apostle himself will give us what we want. In John xiv. 15 we read, *ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς μου τηρήσατε*. The plurality of the precepts here mentioned is reduced again, according to the context, to the unity of the one commandment given in ch. xiii. 34: *ἐντολὴν καινὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους*. That in the Gospel the love of Christ is spoken of, while here it is the love of God, is of no moment; since the apostle knows no love to Christ which is not love to God, and no love to God which is not love to Christ.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1.

Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται· καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα, ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

The synthesis of our relation to God and to the brethren, which the apostle here perfectly sets forth, he has thus educed primarily from the love of God supposed to exist in us: the right relation to God is confirmed and corroborated only by the right relation to the brethren. He now seizes the matter from the opposite side: brotherly love is to be measured by the reality of our fellowship with God. This thought, expressed in ch. v. 2, is the fundamental note of the verses which follow, the first verse of the chapter forming only a transition to it. Several new ideas enter here. First, instead of the *ἀδελφός*, as the hitherto usual designation of the neighbour, the phrases *γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* and *τέκνον Θεοῦ* (ver. 2) are selected to be reproduced. This is done in the service of the synthesis here brought out perfectly: because we are to love our neighbour *as* the child of God, the genuineness of our love to him is proved, as ver. 2 declares, by the genuineness of our love to God; if this love to God is absent, I cannot love my neighbour as a child of God, and therefore do not regard him with the right kind of sentiment. For since, according to ch. iv., charity to the neighbour depends upon the infusion of divine love, that is, of the divine Spirit, such charity must be always absent where the right relation to God is not sustained. The first verse of our new chapter asserts generally, that between our relation to God and our relation to the brethren there must be a reciprocal influence; ver. 2 seq. then explains, as we have seen, how the approval

of our relation to God is a sure token of our right relation to the brethren.

Similarly significant is the introduction of the idea πιστεύειν. It had twice before occurred, ch. iii. 23 and iv. 16, but on both occasions only in a certain sense as signals for the future, without taking any definite place in the organic train of thought in the Epistle. It does not take that place until this fifth chapter. In other respects the beginning of the first verse is based upon ch. iv. 2 and iv. 15; the question therefore arises, why in those passages ὁμολογεῖν is the subject, while here it is πιστεύειν. It is clear that ὁμολογεῖν presupposes πιστεύειν and includes it. In the fourth chapter, as our investigation has shown us, faith in Christ does not appear as a characteristic in man himself, or a property of his own; but as the token by which he may be known to be a child of God, a partaker of the Divine Spirit. But what is in man may be known only so far as it takes outward expression; and the outward expression of faith is simply and only the ὁμολογεῖν. Here, however, the question is not of an external, but of an internal token of divine sonship; hence the word πίστις is introduced. That πιστεύειν in this place and generally expresses primarily the acknowledgment of a truth is sufficiently obvious: as here, the proposition that Jesus is the Christ is to be acknowledged. So, when we read of πιστεύειν τινί, we acknowledge the trustworthiness of the person generally. But this does not exhaust the idea: for, when in John v. 44 the πιστεύειν is opposed to the δόξαν παρ' ἀλλήλων λαμβάνειν, that is, to the egoism which seeks τὰ ἴδια, such a view of faith as that is seen to be insufficient; and when in John xx. 31 the end of the whole Gospel is laid down as being ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε, it is impossible to suppose that a mere acknowledgment as truth could include the whole ζωή, which is the state of the whole man as thinking, feeling, and willing. In very deed, there lies in πιστεύειν the idea of the *unio mystica*; more strictly, the union and conjunction of the human with the divine, which is effected fundamentally in the acknowledgment of the central fact of salvation (Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ

Χριστός). Now it is certainly true that the *πίστις* is not in itself the sonship; for to this belongs another element, the gift of God. Compare as to this two passages of the Gospel, in which, as here, faith and sonship are placed in juxtaposition. The first is in John i. 12: *ὅσοι οὖν ἔλαβον αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.* If to believers the power is given to *become* sons of God, then they *are* not such in virtue of their faith: there is necessary beyond this a special gift of God (*ἔδωκεν*). And as, in the immediately following words, this divine sonship is explained as a *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, it cannot be regarded as simply equivalent to the human acting of faith; but the divine causality is there brought prominently forward which makes us the children of God. The second passage is in John iii. In the fourth verse the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἄνωθεν* is described as a *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος*; it is therefore marked out as an act of God, or rather as the communication of the Divine Spirit. But then Christ answers the question of Nicodemus, *πῶς δύναται ταῦτα γενέσθαι*,—which was by no means an exclamation in the wondering rhetorical form of interrogation, but literally a simple question: "In what way, through what means, is such a total renewal possible?"—Christ answers it, we affirm, summarily by the requirement of faith: "Dost thou, the celebrated teacher of the law, so little know the law?" As, in the Old Testament, the people stung by serpents were saved by believing on the sign divinely lifted up, so in the New Testament men are saved by faith in the divine sign of the Son of man lifted up. Thus through faith *δύναται ταῦτα γενέσθαι*; and still this *ταῦτα* is, according to vers. 2 and 3, a divine act, the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ πνεύματος*. Between these two, the human faith and the divine act, there is no contrariety, but a synthesis is necessary. In order to the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* there must be, first of all, an infusion of the *σπέρμα Θεοῦ*, the divine germ of life, and this represents the one element. As, however, the *γεγεννῆσθαι* is not a new creation, but rather a renewal or transformation, the new life

can come to realization only as it stamps its impress on the original elements of man's nature, and makes that its organ; or, in other words, as the subject under the operation unites himself and is conjoined with the divine *σπέρμα*. Now this latter element is the *πίστις*. When, then, our passage says that every one who believeth is born of God, the ideas of subject and predicate are not in themselves of equal comprehension, that of the subject is narrower than that of the predicate; and it is only established that where faith, the act demanded on the part of man, is present, there certainly also the divine act, the impartation of the Spirit, may be found also; and thus the existence of the former is a sufficient and satisfactory sign of the reality of sonship. Where, however, a *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* is experienced, —this is the further meaning of the verse,—a relation is proved not only to Him who begets, but also to those begotten of Him, that is, to the brethren.

Verse 2.

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅταν τὸν Θεὸν ἀγαπῶμεν καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

But it is not the apostle's purpose to show that love to God and love to the brethren must go hand in hand; this is only the basis of the subsequent exposition, that our relation to God must lay down the standard for our love to the brethren. The two verses, therefore, are connected as the more general and the more particular. The thought presented by the new verse is, however, in itself very striking. If it said that brotherly love *rests* upon the divine love, and that the latter is the *causa essendi* of the former, this would be perfectly clear. But what of the *causa cognoscendi?* Has not St. John at the close of the former explained simply that brotherly love is the token of the love of God, indeed the only evidence of it? First, it is to be observed that not the love of God in itself is the approving mark of brotherly love, but as connected with the addition *καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν*, while the relation between this love to God and obedience to His commandments is laid down in the first clause of the third verse:

herein consists the love of God; there is no other than that which approves itself in obedience. The same relation between love and practical obedience we find in John xiv. 31: *ἵνα γνῷ ὁ κόσμος, ὅτι ἀγαπῶ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ, καθὼς ἐνετείλατό μοι ὁ πατὴρ, οὕτω ποιῶ*, where certainly the clause with *ὅτι* shows how the world is to recognise the love of Christ to His Father. Compare also John xiv. 15: *ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με, καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς μου τηρήσατε.*

But what does this mean, what the commandments which are here spoken of? Do they mean brotherly love? Impossible, for then the sense would be pure tautology: we know our brotherly love by this, that we keep the commandment of loving the brethren; or, in other words, he that hath brotherly love hath it. It is the following verse, rather, which specifies the contents of the *ἐντολαὶ Θεοῦ*, that is, in the *νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον*. As the world is vanquished, the kingdom of God is built up; these two are not separate and distinct factors; they are inseparably bound up with each other. Accordingly, the *ἐντολαὶ Θεοῦ* are no other than what St. John had laid down in ch. iii. as the *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*. And now we may take a complete survey of the apostle's thought. Besides the genuine Christian brotherly love there is another, a purely natural love, which, however, is in fact only a sublimated egoism, and concerning which in its various forms the word of St. James holds good, that it is in its gradation *ἐπίγειος, ψυχική, δαιμονιώδης*. These may in their most amiable and seductive aspects easily enough suggest the erroneous idea that in them the commandment of the apostle is fulfilled. Now, whether the love is a thoroughly Christian sentiment, a love towards the *τέκνα Θεοῦ*, flowing from the *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, we may surely judge by the answer to the question whether we practise the *δικαιοσύνη*, or, negatively, whether we overcome the world. Every imaginable exhibition of brotherly love approves itself as Christian, and therefore genuine, by this, that it is a stone contributed to the house or kingdom of God, a blow dealt to the kingdom of darkness; only as we are the performers of the divine will and conscious of divine ends, can we recognise

ourselves as *ἀγαπῶντες τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ*; for only then has our deportment any reference to men as they are children of God. At the close of the previous chapter it was said that brotherly love alone was the test by which we must try our love to God; because, as we saw in ver. 21, there is no obedience towards God possible which should not be at the same time and equally a working and striving and living for the brethren. Here we have the converse. If we build up the kingdom of God, the same thing as laying low the kingdom of the world, then we give a plain token of true brotherly love; for there is no genuine love to God's children which has not in itself this mark or this tendency. In sum, the love of God and charity to our fellow-Christians confirm, corroborate, and approve each other reciprocally: the one idea cannot be considered perfect without the supplement of the other. And here, then, we have found the most absolute synthesis between the two leading thoughts or aspects of truth which govern the whole Epistle, the *κοινωνία μετὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ* and the *κοινωνία μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν*. As objects of thought, or ideas in the mind, we may hold these apart; but in the reality of life they cannot be disjoined. And, looked at from this point of view, our exposition of ch. ii. 3 seq. receives a confirmatory light. We perceived there, regarding only the context, that all the commandments of God in the end are gathered up in that one focus of brotherly love; and the point we have just been establishing must make that appear perfectly natural: in fact, all other precepts are summed up in this; as, on the other hand, the presence of obedience towards God in any other supposable respects must in the long run react upon or lead up to brotherly love.

But the form of the sentence in our verse demands some further consideration. The construction *ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν . . . ἐάν* is common enough both in the Gospel and in our Epistle; but we never find *ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅταν* save in this place. That *ὅταν* is never elsewhere used by St. John with a conditional meaning, will make us hesitate about taking it so here. *Ὅταν* is primarily, just as *ὅτε*, a particle of time; the *ἄν* added to this certainly introduces

a conditional element, without interfering with the idea of time in it: either its force is to define the action as indefinite and often recurring, on each recurrence, however, having a specific result (whenever); or it means that the time of its recurrence is to be expected in the future (when once). Here the former is the case: in every such supposed case (ἄν) there must concur simultaneously (ὅτε) with brotherly love obedience also; and it is precisely in the fact of the latter (ἐν τούτῳ) that we are confident in discerning the former. Whether we are to read at the close of the verb ποιῶμεν or τηρῶμεν is essentially matter of indifference; yet the circumstance that Cod. A omits the next line down to the second τηρῶμεν, seems to indicate that the eye of the transcriber might easily go astray and wander to the following clause, and thus the τηρῶμεν of the third verse was wrongly brought forward into the second, in which originally the unusual ἐντολὰς ποιεῖν stood.

VERSE 3.

Αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα τὰς ἐντολὰς. αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν· καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσίν.

The first clause of the third verse has been made clear so far as its meaning goes: the strict connection between love of God and obedience, introduced before in passing, is here expressly established. This is the substance (αὕτη ἐστίν), and this is, at the same time, the tendency (ἵνα) of love to fulfil the commandments of God. And that follows. not only from the idea of love, but also from the way in which it was brought into our hearts. If love is the reference of my I to another I, love to God is the reference and subjection of my will to the will divine; and if the genesis of love to God is the fact that His prevenient love has been infused into my nature, then, again, the will of God must have become my will. And this obedience to the divine precept, thus demanded, the apostle proceeds to say, is easy; comp. Matt. xi. 30. Assuredly, the expression βαρεῖαι means, primarily, pressing or hard, not "easy to be fulfilled;" but as the commandments are pressing or hard only from the fact that we cannot fulfil them, or fulfil them

only with pains, the two meanings come to one and the same thing. God's laws are not termed light in themselves, as if, that is, they did not require anything heavy or difficult; for, strictly speaking, nothing is easy and nothing difficult of itself; all difficulty lies simply in the relation between the thing concerned and the power of the person concerned. Only to the Christian are the divine commandments easy; because, in the power of faith, of that faith which links him with Christ, there is the strength of union between his will and the divine will. But in the spiritual domain the measure of the will is also ever the measure of the power. Every sin rests not only on a deficiency of power, but also on a deficiency of will.

Verse 4.

Ὅτι πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον, καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν.

The reason which makes the law of God become easy is given in ver. 4*a*. The commandments are hard only through a certain opposition which thwarts them and hinders their being obeyed. This depends upon the power of the world, the *κόσμος*. The world, as the kingdom of darkness, pervaded through and through with powers of evil (compare on ch. ii. 15), has evermore the tendency to act in opposition to the divine will; and inasmuch as *all* that is earthly has in and for itself this tendency, so *all* obedience towards God must be wrested, so to speak, out of the power of the world. The manifold temptations which issue from the *ἐπιθυμία* and the *ἀλαζονεία*; that dependence on the visible which is inborn in all men; the sins also which predominate at any period and throw their influence on all things accordingly, an influence purely of this earth: all these are the issues and outgoings of the *κόσμος* which is by us to be renounced and vanquished. But what is the power which shall gain the abiding victory in a war like this, which shall in fact permanently conquer (present *νικᾷ*)? What is the might that is equal to this? *πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ.* This phrase in the neuter, after the manner of St.

John in some other applications where persons are really meant (comp. John iii. 16, vi. 37, xvii. 2), is, however, not to be at once regarded as identical with *πάντες οἱ γεγεννημένοι*. The distinction makes itself easily felt on consideration: this latter phrase would make the person prominent; such and such men, so furnished, conquer; but St. John's expression places in the foreground the power by which they conquer, the divine cause, working in the personality, which carries away the victory. The divine energy, the power of light, wherever it truly works (*πᾶν*), does without exception (*νικᾷ*) win the cause and triumph over the world as the seat of all darkness. Now, because this victory is so absolutely a thing of necessity, therefore the divine commandments which require and enforce this victory cannot be grievous.

What power is there that can successfully oppose the world, which is the sphere of the transitory (comp. ch. ii. 17, *ὁ κόσμος παράγεται*) because it is the sphere of the visible (comp. 2 Cor. iv. 18, *τὰ βλεπόμενα πρόσκαιρα, τὸ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια*), save that power the nature of which is, according to Heb. xi. 1, to have commerce with the invisible (*οὐ βλεπόμενα*), that is, the virtue of faith? The three clauses, vers. 4*a*, 4*b*, 5, are so related to each other that this victorious energy is in each case brought into clearer definition. First, we have it in general that this victory depends upon regeneration; then, more distinctly, it is so far as the divine birth evokes faith; finally, in ver. 5, that this faith is, more particularly viewed, a faith in Jesus as the Son of God. In the words *νίκη νικήσασα*, two elements of thought are combined,—that is to say, while the perfect *νικήσασα* leads us to think of the armour and stress of the combat that wins the fight, *νίκη* gives simply the result of the contest. There is no need to explain away one in order to make the other clearer: both should have their full expression. In believing itself, the world is already virtually overcome; and faith has ever vanquished from the beginning, being the armour or the means to which victory is always attached. On the other hand, faith is also the victory itself, for it is the result of

the conflict: through believing I vanquish the world, and win for myself as a prize the same faith; so that it can now, as the result, unfold without fatal opposition all its force. But inasmuch as faith involves in itself, germinally, a victory over the world, its development takes place in actual life through a series of crises or stages; it becomes gradually manifest in all its character. Even as Christ Himself *had* already conquered and slain the world and its prince, while yet this victory has to be brought out into external manifestation gradually in the history of the kingdom of God, and through that history, which is no other than the more and more perfect dying out of Satan's power and the more and more nearly approaching death-struggle of Satan himself: so also is our faith, as reflecting the whole work of its Lord in itself, essentially and in germ the completed victory, while yet this victory must find its external and full expression only through a series of stages and processes. The *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*—that is, the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in us—is the *principle* of the victory, faith; as the union and conjunction of our own I with this Divine Spirit, this principle becomes energetic and effectual in individual acts.

Verse 5.

Τίς ἐστιν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον, εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ;

And that faith is no other than faith in Jesus as the Son of God: according to ch. iii. 8, it was the work of Christ to destroy or undo the works of Satan; and His work specifically as the Son of God. He could say *θαρσεῖτε ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον* (John xvi. 33); and faith in Him, full fellowship with Him, reflects all His work even in us. Thus the close of our section, ver. 5, most exactly returns again to its beginning, ver. 1. Birth of God, faith, and the accomplishment of the divine will, which constitute the victory over the world, are exhibited in their combination and interdependence, and at the same time as evidence of brotherly love.

VERSES 6–11.

Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς, οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ τῷ αἵματι· καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια. ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες [ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατὴρ, ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἕν εἰσι. καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῇ], τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἕν εἰσιν. Εἰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαμβάνομεν, ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Θεοῦ μείζων ἐστίν· ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἣν μεμαρτύρηκε περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. Ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ· ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ Θεῷ, ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αὐτὸν, ὅτι οὐ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν, ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ Θεὸς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν.

Thus, then, it appears that the section we have just been considering forms one whole with that of ch. iv. 19–21; but we observe that there is in it one distinct element, which carries us back again to the beginning of the Epistle. In the middle of its first sentence it was declared that the *λόγος τῆς ζωῆς* would form the contents of it; that St. John's purpose was to give an annunciation concerning Christ; and if not to exhibit His person, yet to exhibit His work in us. He had then in his first main division described the interior religious character of the Christian life in its relation to God and to the brethren; in the second, the external confirmation of this as a token of a right posture towards God and man, and as therefore a condition of true Christian joy. But all this is subsumed under a higher aim: not for its own sake, but for the sake of an annunciation *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς*. The relation to Him—that is, to Christ the Son of God—it was to which his final aim was directed. But this relation is in the New Testament phraseology embraced and expressed by the idea of *πίστις*; and in here introducing this, the apostle rounds off the Epistle into unity; he seems to declare that the design laid

down in ch. i. 1 seq. was in this at length fulfilled. But there is one element in the Introduction which has not yet had justice done to it, having only once, ch. iv. 14, been touched upon in passing: the idea of *μαρτυρία*. What other was the purport of the copious sentence of ch. i. 1 seq., with its so emphatic development of one idea, but the guarantee and witness of the truth of the apostolic tendency? This element is now, in the section ch. v. 6–12, taken up again, although in another form than what it assumed in ch. i. 1. All that the apostle had aimed to teach he had now taught: luminous and distinct, complete and self-contained, lies the full development of his thought before us. He has established the true relation towards God and the brethren; the *παῤῥησία*, as the result even in relation to the יוֹם דִּין וְנוֹרָא; the *χαρὰ τετελειωμένη* is guaranteed and secured; while all this rests upon the outgoings of *πίστις* in the divine Son of God. On this last, therefore, rests the superstructure of the whole. This faith must accordingly in itself be a spiritual possession, absolute and unconquerable; its object must have the strongest possible confirmation and assurance. To show that this is so remains now the apostle's final problem.

The idea of *μαρτυρία*, which, apart from these explanations, must appear to the most superficial and external observation the centre of all that follows, is one that has a remarkable prominence throughout the Johannaean writings. This idea appears at the beginning, and recurs at the end of all the three greater documents which we have received from St. John. In the Apocalypse he commences, ch. i. 2, with the vindication of his trustworthiness: *ὃς ἐμαρτύρησε τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅσα τε εἶδεν*. It is matter of indifference whether the *ἐμαρτύρησεν* referred to the work itself which he was beginning, or to the earlier written Gospel, or to his general and ordinary oral ministry: in any case, it is the drift of the apostle to introduce a guarantee of his veracity by the mention of his eye-witness-ship (*ὅσα τε εἶδε*). So, again, at the close of the book, ch. xxii., its contents are summed up again and again as a *μαρτυρία* of our Lord. The Gospel, in its turn, goes on, after the prologue, with the *μαρτυρία* of the Baptist,

ch. i. 18 seq., and ends with that of the evangelist himself, ch. xxi. 24. And, finally, our Epistle begins with the personal testimony of the apostle, while it ends with that of God Himself. But to return, the body of the Gospel gives the same prominent part to the idea of the *μαρτυρεῖν*: the valid and sufficient witness which the Lord has to appeal to in His controversies with the Jews is a thought which is constantly on His lips. In particular, He appeals in His own behalf again and again—compare John v. 32, viii. 18, xv. 26 (strictly speaking, it is the Holy Ghost who is referred to in this last)—to the witness of His God to His mission. Now it is precisely this, as we have seen, which is spoken of in our present passage. It is true that in ver. 6 the witness is that of the Spirit; in ver. 8, that of water, and blood, and the Spirit; but as from ver. 9 onwards THE witness of God is spoken of (mark the article) without any kind of specification as to the manner or the medium in which this testimony reaches us, it follows from this last circumstance, as well as from the definite article, that the water, and the blood, and the Spirit have no independent meaning of their own, but are only the mediating representations of the divine testimony. They together form, in fact, the *μαρτυρία τοῦ Θεοῦ*.

We have here, however, two things sharply to distinguish. First comes the question as to the substance of the witness of God: what does it testify? This question is fully and clearly answered in ver. 11, *αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν*; but it is also, in a more condensed form, contained in ver. 6. However, if we are content for a time with the perfectly clear answer in ver. 11, we perceive that the object of the divine testimony is the eternal life sealed for us in the Son of God: He is the possessor (*ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστι*), and He is the mediator, of this life. The second question is this: by what means does God bear His witness? And its answer: by water, blood, Spirit. Now we have in the substance of the divine testimony, given to us in ver. 11, a standard by which we may measure and ascertain the correctness of our interpretation of these three witnesses.

They must be such as can testify concerning Jesus as the possessor of eternal life, and as the giver of eternal life to us. In what sense, then, do the water, the blood, the Spirit furnish this witness for Christ?

In order to explain the water and the blood, we must consider the twofold relation which they here assume. First, they are witnesses, or media of the testimony, *ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ Θεὸς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ*: the water and the blood must therefore represent some divine act, some divine institution, in virtue of which God appears in behalf of Christ. Secondly, it is to be observed that Christ Himself is said to have come *δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος*. Now, as St. John uses always the word "come," or the *ἔρχεσθαι*, concerning Christ, as a *vox solemnis* which refers to the coming of Jesus as the Messiah,—not to His being born generally, but to His manifestation as Saviour of the world,—the proposition before us must needs signify that Jesus attained His Messianic position through water and blood. These two are therefore not only the pledge of His divine sonship, but at the same time the powers through which He was constituted the Saviour: the water and the blood must, accordingly, be pointed to as constitutive factors in the life of the Redeemer. Before, however, we look more closely at the sense in which this is true, we must first justify the phraseology we have just used. We have, that is, described the testimony here concerned, now as witnessing His divine sonship, and now as witnessing His Messianic activity,—that is, as at once testimony to His person and as testimony also to His work. For this double way of describing it we have the apostle's own warranty; for in ver. 11 he refers both to the gift of life and to the bringer of life as the object of the divine witness. And, in fact, the one is involved in the other: He who is to give the life must first have it in Himself; and He who has it in Himself is thereby declared to be the Son of God, according to John v. 26, *ὥσπερ ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως ἔδωκε καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ*. He who *ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ* life is thereby demonstrated to be the Son of God; and He who shall give life to others must *ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔχειν* that life.

Thus in reality the divine sonship and the Messiahship of Jesus are bound up together.

But what manner of water is that, concerning which so great things are said? Primarily, we are led to think of the baptism which Christ received at the hands of John the Baptist. In truth, He was by that baptism inaugurated into His Messianic function: the three Synoptists make this point of view abundantly prominent; and at the first glance it seems therefore perfectly intelligible, when it is said *δι' ὕδατος*, that He came as the Messiah by this baptismal water, that this event was the medium of His introduction to His Christly function, and fitted Him to enter on it. But we must bethink ourselves to examine this closely. What prepared Jesus for His office was not the baptismal water, but the communication of the Spirit connected with His baptism. In our sacramental Christian baptism, indeed, the water and the impartation of the Spirit through the rite are so inseparably united, that the one word water may well be used to signify the whole, including the heavenly blessing: the earthly sign and the heavenly reality are in the sacrament indissolubly one. But it was quite otherwise in the baptism of John. That was assuredly no sacramental act, and certainly did not of itself confer the Holy Ghost: whence, indeed, John himself could say that, in contrast with his own baptism, *Christ* would baptize with the Holy Ghost: compare John i. 33, *ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν· ἐφ' ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον . . . οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*. The communication of the Spirit, of which our Lord at His baptism was the object, was not itself connected by any means with that baptism as such; but it was an extraordinary event, which was attached to it. John's baptism and Christian baptism are in antithesis to each other: in the former, man is, primarily, the giver; in the latter, he is the receiver. He who submitted to John's rite laid down this confession: as the water cleanses my body, so will I henceforth dedicate my soul to God in pure service. Anything like an extraordinary supernatural gift of God to man was not by any means connected with this

act. Thus, if the question here is of the inauguration of Christ to His office, the designation of baptism by ὕδωρ would be altogether unsuitable; since the introduction to His function was not by baptism in itself, but by the gift of the Spirit[1] not necessarily connected with that rite. Moreover, the water of Christ's baptism cannot by any means be exhibited as a witness of His divine mission: this external rite was in fact one common to the Lord and many besides, which therefore did not involve of itself any such virtue of special testimony. The voice which sounded from heaven, or the Spirit who ὡσεὶ περιστερά descended on Jesus, might indeed have this virtue; but they would not be designated by ὕδωρ, because, as we have seen, the baptism of John did not necessarily include the gift of the Spirit.

We must therefore look about for another interpretation of the ὕδωρ. Does it signify Christian baptism? It is clear that this, in contradistinction to that of John, may well be described by ὕδωρ; since that essential and necessary interpretation of water and Spirit, form and matter, is found in it which is absent from John's baptism. And the phrase ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος is thus perfectly intelligible. The Baptist himself comprises the whole work of Christ in this, that He would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Even the fact that the baptismal sacrament was instituted only at the end of our Lord's ministry would not stand obstinately in the way of this explanation; for the proper unfolding of the Messianic activity of Christ, to which the ἔρχεσθαι refers, actually attained its consummation only at the end of His course upon earth. We should

[1] It may seem strange that, according to the consentient narratives of the evangelists, Jesus first received the Holy Ghost in connection with His baptism, whereas He was filled with the Spirit in His mother's womb. The solution of the difficulty lies in the distinction between the Spirit as a principle filling His personal life, and the Spirit as an official gift for communication to others. This distinction finds a more distant analogy in the fact that among men the knowledge of a matter does not involve either the vocation or the gift to appear as a witness and teacher concerning it, which latter is wont to be matured by definite experiences. A nearer analogy lies in the double impartation of the Spirit to the disciples on the evening of the resurrection and on the morning of Pentecost.

indeed expect to read ἐρχόμενος; since the historically completed fact of the manifestation of the Messiah in the world was not consummated by means of the baptismal sacrament; rather in it He continuously comes as the Saviour and Redeemer of men. Another reason for rejecting this view is suggested by the way in which the ὕδωρ and the αἷμα are here placed in correlation or opposition: for Christian baptism itself includes a reference to the death, and therefore to the blood of Christ, according to the Pauline declaration of Rom. vi. 3, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν. Now, where it is said that Christ came not by water alone, but by water and blood, there is ascribed to each of these elements a specific matter: there is somewhat in the blood which is not found in the water. But, as we have seen that in the baptismal sacrament water and blood are together efficient, the interpretation which makes the water the sacrament of baptism is not altogether suitable. And this objection is strengthened when we consider the peculiar position which St. John assumes to the sacraments generally. We certainly find in his Gospel passages which must be referred incidentally to the sacraments, having in them their highest fulfilment and truth; but we find no reference to the institution of these rites, nor indeed any mention of them as such. In John vi. our Lord speaks of the eating of His flesh and drinking His blood, and the words in question doubtless allude *also* to the holy supper; but the explanation of eating by the idea of faith itself shows that the paragraph is primarily to be understood as a symbolic way of teaching the full and living appropriation of Christ Himself (ἐγὼ ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς) and of His atonement (αἷμα). Similarly, when John iii. speaks of regeneration of water and the Spirit, the words certainly allude to the water of baptism; indeed they cannot be read by Christian people without bringing this allusion to their consciousness. But the very fact that there existed at the time no sacrament of baptism, that therefore Nicodemus, to whom the words were applied, could not, if this were their only meaning, have understood them, indicates that the water also must primarily be accepted in its symbolical

sense. Now, as we have seen that our Epistle never in any passage goes beyond the circle of thought prescribed by the Gospel, this of itself must make us suspicious of accepting a reference to the sacraments as the direct and exclusive meaning of our present passage.

Thus we are led to make the experiment, whether the same interpretation of ὕδωρ which applies everywhere to the Gospel may not be here also applicable,—that is, in effect, the symbolical. A test of this method of interpretation we have in the fact that the meaning of the water in our text must be different from that of the blood: this latter must involve an element which the former has not; while both must be available and equally valid as witnesses for Christ. Now at the outset we find the symbolical use of the ὕδωρ in John iv., "he that drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst;" and, further, in John vii. 38, "he that believeth on me, out of his body shall flow rivers of living water." In these passages we must understand by the water the new and saving life, which springs up fresh and clear as from a fountain: compare the πηγαὶ τοῦ σωτηρίου of Isa. xii. 3, and Ps. xxiii. 2. On the other hand, the washing with water is in the Old Testament ritual the means of purification; and the water very frequently elsewhere occurs with this meaning, apart from the legal observances. The two symbolical applications must not be sundered, for they rest on the same fundamental ideas: water is the symbol, not only of the attainment of purification, that is, of holiness, but of the possession of it as the result. Thus we find it in the passage, John iii. 5, which is fundamental for the meaning of our present text: the new birth of water and of the Spirit describes the production of new and pure and saving life, ὕδωρ, through the Holy Ghost, πνεῦμα. Thus the relation of the water and the blood is clear, at least clear in general: in the blood lies the element of propitiation; this is wanting in the water, which points rather to redemption. Regeneration is, in fact, primarily not so much the expiation of the past, as the implanting of a new nature, the establishing of salvation. That negative aspect, according to which the

λοῦτρον παλιγγενεσίας becomes at the same time βαπτισμὸς εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (Acts ii. 38), is introduced first by the above-mentioned reference to the death of Christ. Accordingly, the ὕδωρ would here be the symbol of the new divine life, filled and replenished with purifying energies, which the Redeemer has brought. In virtue (διά) of this power existing in Himself, as the source of the fountain (John iv.), He came as the Messiah (ἦλθεν): only because He had this life of salvation and could impart it to us was He fitted to be the Messiah. And, at the same time, the fact that the powers of a new and saving life came from Christ, is the witness that legitimates Him as the Son of God. For, as we unfolded at the outset of our discussion, He who can impart life is thereby guaranteed as the possessor of it, and, moreover, therefore attested to be the Son of God. So far we are led by the principle of a purely symbolical interpretation; it must be admitted, however, as the exegetical feeling of every one will suggest, that the interpretation of ὕδωρ thus arrived at is not at all points satisfactory and sufficient. But before we penetrate further, we must deal in a similar way with the αἷμα for its preliminary symbolical exposition.

That the αἷμα is not to be understood, primarily at least, of the sacrament of the altar, is shown—apart from what has been already said, which partly applies here also—by the fact that there is in the New Testament no allusion to the Lord's Supper, which mentions only the blood. But we have in our Epistle itself one passage which expresses to us the significance of the blood of Christ, and from which, therefore, we must not in our interpretation of the present text without strong necessity depart: it is in ch. ii. 2 (also ch. iv. 10), where the ἱλασμός, the propitiation, is described as the result of the death of the Redeemer. And to this we must add ch. i. 7, τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας. Accordingly St. John says here that Christ, by means of His propitiatory death, came forward as the Messiah; that in this lay the realization of His work as the Saviour. And this atoning power, which proceeds from Him and fills His being (ἦλθεν ἐν

αἵματι), is the second witness which God bears to Him. It demonstrates that He in whom such power dwells is the Son of God.

This symbolical interpretation of the ὕδωρ and αἷμα by no means excludes the possibility that the sacraments are also included in these expressions. It is, in fact, not fortuitous that in baptism the water, in the Eucharist the blood, assume so prominent a place; it was so appointed, because in the former the renewal of the power of life, the purifying and saving energy of the Spirit, is the main point; in the latter, the appropriation of the atonement lying in the blood of Jesus. Indeed, with baptism also is connected the forgiveness of sins, and therefore expiation, and with the Eucharist renewal to pure life; but still in such a way that with baptism the element of the implanting of new life comes into the foreground, with the Eucharist the suppression of the sin indwelling in the flesh by the diffusion and penetration of the glorified body of Christ. While, therefore, the reasons already alleged forbid our thinking of the sacraments primarily and exclusively, they are so far included as the symbolical meaning of the water and the blood finds in them its application, indeed its culminating application. Our passage, accordingly, ranks side by side with the third and sixth chapters of the Gospel. It is even probable that the thought of the sacraments, and the order in which they are received by Christians, prescribed the order of the words ὕδωρ καὶ αἷμα.

But, as we said before, the interpretation thus reached does not perfectly satisfy. For, though ὕδωρ and αἷμα often occur in St. John symbolically, or rather tropically, this does not explain how this tropical expression finds its way here. Instead of saying that the powers of the new life which Christ has brought testify for Him, to say that the water testifies for Him,—is and must ever be thought inexpressibly hard. In addition to this: granted that the blood is here a symbol of expiation, yet it is not as a mere trope, or figurative style of speaking; actual and true blood was shed and effected the propitiation, and therefore the

expression *αἷμα* is perfectly intelligible in this connection. The blood, that is, the expiating blood of Christ poured out on the cross, witnesses to His divine sonship. But is not this precise background of reality altogether wanting in the *ὕδωρ*? Is it not merely a purely figurative expression, and one that in this passage has no foundation for it assigned? It would indeed be altogether different, if in the life of Christ—apart from His baptism, which we have found to be inapplicable for our purpose—there could be specified any point at which actual water appears in the higher symbolical sense we have indicated, thus giving our passage just such a concrete historical foundation as the blood has in it: such an event as we now contemplate would assume in the mind of the apostle and of his readers a place of peculiar prominence, so that the mention of the water would at once and necessarily suggest it. Now such an event is found; and our whole passage would receive a rich illumination if it could be shown that it refers to John xix. 34: a passage the reference to which is so obvious that it is difficult not to point to it at once. It is not simply that in these two passages of Scripture alone blood and water are thus placed in juxtaposition; in both cases they are conjoined in an equally marked manner, with manifest emphasis; and in both cases *μαρτυρεῖν* is the idea under the light of which the *αἷμα* and *ὕδωρ* are introduced. Now, if it can be shown that that water and that blood which are spoken of in the history of the passion are to be typically understood, that is, that there an external fact occurred which bore in it a deeper meaning; that, further, the interpretation of the type, or rather of the typical ideas *ὕδωρ* and *αἷμα*, is there the same as we have discerned to be true in our present passage: then shall we be constrained to regard the passage in the Gospel as the foundation of this; and similarly, the relation of these symbolical expressions, as well as the meaning we have discovered in them, will be demonstrated afresh and more fully illustrated. The only external reason which can be adduced in opposition to our reference to John xix. is this, that the blood comes first in the Gospel, while here the water has precedence.

But the force of this objection is altogether neutralized by a consideration of two things. First, in the Gospel the apostle observes the order in which the elements issued from the Lord's side, while here the water comes first on account of the reference, mentioned above, to the sacraments. Secondly, the difference urged has the less significance, because (presupposing the symbolical meaning of the water and the blood in the Gospel, which we shall confirm presently) the difference between redemption and propitiation is generally a fleeting one, the two ideas being involved in each other.

Now let us examine John xix. 34 seq. more carefully. First of all, it is an altogether wrong view of the incident, that blood and water issued from the Redeemer, which sees in it only a demonstration that Jesus had actually died. It is not only the fact—often remarked—that Christian antiquity never had doubts about the reality of Christ's death, and that therefore so emphatic a demonstration of it might appear quite without reason; but to attain such an end the apostle is supposed to have adopted the worst possible means. At any rate, it would have been much simpler to say that the soldier pierced the heart of our Lord. Moreover, we can scarcely attribute to the evangelist so much physiological knowledge as to be aware that the dissolution of the blood into placenta and serum was a sure sign of consummated death: even granting that this can be proved, which we do not believe. How could a fact of such special peculiarity that its physiological explanation has not to the present day been arrived at, have been used as a decisive evidence of the death of Jesus? Since these elements do not usually flow from a corpse any more than from a living body, the conclusion might have drawn with equal truth and untruth to the life of Christ, or His death not consummate. But the main point is this: the Old Testament citations introduced by γάρ in vers. 36, 37 must, if it had been the apostle's design to confirm the fact of Christ's death, stand in some connection with that design. But we see no trace of such a connection. The quotations are no more linked with the flowing of blood and water than they are with the

certainty of our Lord's death. They furnish evidence that the piercing with the lance, and the pretermission of the breaking the legs, were predicted in the Old Testament: not, however, to establish the reality of these facts themselves, but to point out that He, as to whom that took place and this did not take place, was the Messiah. No bone of the paschal Lamb was to be broken; Jesus therefore, by the circumstance that the *crurifragium* could not befall Him, was marked out as the paschal Lamb. They were to look on Him as Jehovah whom they pierced: the piercing of the lance, therefore, marked out Jesus as Jehovah, as the Son of God. Thus all else that is recorded in this section was to demonstrate Jesus to be the Messiah and the Son of God: the flowing of blood and water from His side must be regarded from the same point of view. And that this is the only right one, appears from ver. 35: *ὁ ἑωρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκε, καὶ ἀληθινή ἐστιν αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία, κἀκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε ὅτι ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.* St. John says, *ὁ ἑωρακώς*: in this he includes in one whole all that he had related, the pouring out, therefore, of blood and water included; and he declares all to be testimony that Jesus was the Son of God. If, indeed, the words quoted in ver. 35 produce the impression that they record something miraculous, something so wonderful that it might appear incredible to the readers, this cannot refer so much to the piercing itself, which was not such a matter of wonder, but to the water and blood which flowed from the side of Jesus. For the fact of the piercing, and the pretermitted *crurifragium*, the apostle can appeal to other witnesses, those of the Old Testament, which also explain the facts as indicating the divine sonship of our Lord. But he has no other witness for the water and the blood; instead, therefore, of that, he must himself give the most confident assertion of his exact and true observation; and he must himself explain what he saw. Accordingly, the facts adduced by the evangelist receive a twofold illustration: first, the truth of each is attested by the apostle's eye-witness, with that of the Old Testament superadded; secondly, their significance

is confirmed, and this significance is declared to be the same in all three, that is, the vindication of Christ as the Son of God.

But it is clear that the flowing of blood and water could not of itself attest this truth; this it could do only if the two ideas are symbolically understood. These symbols we must interpret according to the general usage of Scripture, and especially that of St. John, and thus obtain for the passage in the Gospel the same results which we have arrived at in the case of our text in the Epistle. As the prophecy of Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," would maintain its applicability to Christ even if He had never set His foot in Egypt, though He was carried to Egypt that the prophecy might be set in a clearer light; as the word of Zechariah concerning the meek King sitting on an ass would maintain its truth even without its external fulfilment in the history of Palm Sunday: so would the significance of the death of Jesus naturally be the same if it had not been symbolically exhibited in the flowing forth of the blood and water. But God so ordered it that the internal should become external; and the apostle's wonder approved and attested this divine and altogether miraculous order of Providence. If we revert to our passage in the Epistle, this now receives its most satisfactory and final elucidation. First, it is plain how the powers of purifying renewal and reconciliation might be here expressed by ὕδωρ and αἷμα: they are used on the ground of the fact in the Gospel, which is by St. John made prominent with such emphasis, and in which water and blood occur with so symbolical a meaning. Whenever one acquainted with the Gospel read this passage, and noted that the question was concerning a witness borne, he must have recalled to his mind that historical event. Secondly, it is clear how water and blood could be adduced as witnesses appointed of God: for in a most marvellous way God had so ordered it that blood and water should flow from the side of the Crucified, and thus symbolically seal His vocation as a Saviour.

But there is yet a third witness given by God, the Spirit; and the matter of His testimony is guaranteed (ὅτι),

because the Spirit is the truth. This clause must be considered well on all sides. It needs no argument that *πνεῦμα* is the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, without whom no man can call Jesus Lord, and who bears witness to Jesus as the Christ in our hearts; but we must note the accordance with John xv. 26, where in like manner the *μαρτυρεῖν περὶ Χριστοῦ* is exhibited as the function of the Paraclete. In the paraphrase we have given, the clause with *ὅτι* is not regarded as the substance of the testimony, but as the ground of its truth. If it is taken as the substance of it, and translated, "The Spirit beareth witness that the Spirit is truth," thus making the Spirit bear witness to Himself, we have only to observe that He is certainly introduced here only as a witness for Christ. Moreover, it would be a poor specification of the matter of His testimony, that He witnesses His own truth, that is Himself: the main idea, His testimony that *His witness to Christ* is true, would be wanting. Or we should be obliged to understand the first *πνεῦμα* of the Spirit as the third Person in the Godhead, and the second of the Spirit as dwelling in man, or of the Spirit of Christ as blended with the human spirit. But, apart from the question whether we may establish such a severance at all, we know nothing generally of a testimony of the Holy Spirit of the Trinity *in His distinction* from the Spirit of God as ruling in man. Finally, if we should understand the second *πνεῦμα* of the human spirit, and explain it after the analogy of Rom. viii. 16, *αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν*, we should then miss this precise *ἡμῶν* in our passage.

On the other hand, the thought is perfectly clear and truly Johannaean if we take *ὅτι* as the causal particle: the Spirit of God, who enters into man, is in Himself a *πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας* (John xv. 26), and therefore the testimony which He bears for Christ in our experience is true. But there yet remains one difficulty, and that is the article before *μαρτυροῦν*. The proposition, *τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ μαρτυροῦν*, by means of this article produces the impression that the Spirit is the only witness, while, nevertheless, the apostle goes on, *ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες*. In this

last clause the Spirit is mentioned co-ordinately with the water and the blood: the three have all *one* office of witness. On the other hand, our proposition in its formal construction exhibits the Spirit not as conjoined with the water and the blood, but as conjoined with Christ. That is to say, ver. 6*a*, οὗτός (*scil.* Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός) ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος κ.τ.λ., manifestly corresponds with ver. 6*c*, τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ μαρτυροῦν. Accordingly, the Spirit assumes a twofold position: one as parallel with Christ, who came by water and blood, and another as parallel with this same water and blood themselves. As to the former, *Christ* came as the Messiah by water and blood, He *brought* salvation and propitiation; the *Spirit's* office is to *witness* for this, and then to appropriate and be the means of imparting in detail what was once accomplished as a whole by the Redeemer. Thus we can explain the article in our text, τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ μαρτυροῦν: the Lord is the bringer (ὁ ἐλθὼν διὰ κ.τ.λ.), the Spirit is the attester. The article does not therefore refer to the fact that the Spirit and no other attests, but to the fact that He in relation to Christ's work has the function only of witnessing, not that of any fundamental work of His own. Thus, in a certain sense, Christ and the Spirit have their distinct offices in the accomplishment of our salvation. As to the latter, the Spirit has also a function running parallel with the water and the blood. If these last, to wit, are the actual demonstrations that He is the Saviour, that is, because He administers salvation, then they are also witnesses, μάρτυρες; and, the Spirit being reckoned with them, whose specific office is that of testimony, we have three witnesses. Thus we assign its rights to the telic ὅτι, as establishing the fact ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες. It must not be forgotten that in the very order of the sentence the emphasis falls upon the τρεῖς. It is not as if the general proposition, firmly established to the apostle, concerning the threefold witness, confirmed the correctness of the deductions drawn in ver. 6 as to the fact of the three testimonies—for how should such a proposition be *a priori* firmly established in his mind?—but the ὅτι

refers also to the second part of the clause, *καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἕν εἰσιν*; and what was to be established is not the immediately preceding proposition, but *οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the statement whose demonstration was the chief question throughout. That three witnesses give the same testimony is, according to Moses, the guarantee of the truth of any matter; Jesus Himself appealed to this (John viii. 17), and on this the apostle here rests. The trinity of the witnesses, therefore, which furnish *one* testimony, is the demonstration (*ὅτι*) of the divine sonship of the Lord.

But all the three witnesses named were given by *God* (ver. 9): He is in the end the only Testifier. His witness, however, is by the perfect *μεμαρτύρηκεν* described as one that is closed and perfected. If the blood and water were referred exclusively or even primarily to the sacraments, this would be unintelligible; for their influence goes on perpetually. But if we are to think first of the *ἔρχεσθαι* of Christ, and further of the event that took place in His death, the perfect tense is explained clearly: this is the witness of God, that He *sent* Christ filled with purifying and atoning powers, that He provided an external authentication of this power given to Christ in the issuing of blood and water from His side in death; and similarly, that He *sent* the Spirit as a witness. The Spirit Himself *μαρτυρεῖ*; but God once for all witnessed in sending Him.

After we have thus generally elucidated the constitutive fundamental ideas, we have the details to observe on; and pre-eminently to decide the question whether ver. 7 belongs to the text or not. If our decision invariably depended on the testimony of manuscripts known to us, there could be no question about the genuineness or spuriousness of this verse; for it is undeniable that no Greek codex earlier than the sixteenth century contains it. If the text is defended in spite of this, it must be on the ground of quotations from the Fathers; and then it must be explained how it came to pass that the words vanished from the text without leaving a trace. In both these respects the matter here is very different from that involved in the reading of ch. iv. 3, *λύειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν*. In this latter case a reading no longer extant

at the threshold of the third century was attested in the east and in the west by such men as Irenaeus and Tertullian, while, as we saw, it cannot be proved that Polycarp did *not* know it. But in the case now before us this ver. 7 is found for centuries only in the west, while in the east there is no trace of it; and it may be taken for granted that it could not have been known in the east, for otherwise it would have been used in the Arian controversy. And this leads to the other question, as to the possibility of its vanishing from the text. Let us in this respect also compare ch. v. 7 with ch. iv. 3. The phrase λύειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν might indeed, as Socrates shows, have been applied to refute the heretics; but it was in itself too profound to put an end to the controversy by one stroke; at any rate, it was not of such a kind that every transcriber would at once perceive in it an ἐδραίωμα ἀληθείας. But how different is it with ch. v. 7! No one can deny that in the whole compass of holy writ there is no passage even approaching the dogmatic precision with which, in a manner approximating to the later ecclesiastical definitions, this one asserts the immanent Trinity. Such a verse could not have been omitted by inadvertence; for, even supposing such a thing possible in a text of such moment, the absence of the words ἐν τῇ γῇ of ver. 8 would still be inexplicable. The omission must then have been intentional, and due to the hand of a heretic. But would such an act have remained uncondemned; and were all our manuscripts produced by heretics or constructed from heretical copies? In spite of my subjective conviction of the genuineness of the λύειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, I could not decide to receive this reading into the text of ch. iv. 3; for our editions must, above all things, keep close to the substance of the manuscripts. But to preserve ch. v. 7 cannot by any means be justified. The most acute argument that has been adduced to this hour in its favour is represented by the venerable Bengel, who asserts that here the analysis of the Epistle is summed up in one point, the Trinity being the governing principle of its arrangement. But we have found that an altogether different analysis is the right one; and to us, therefore, this

argument for the genuineness is neutralized. As to the dogmatic shortsightedness which bewails in its loss the removal of a prop for the doctrine of the absolute Trinity, this might be expected in lay circles, but ought not to be found among theologians. A doctrine which should depend on one such utterance, and in its absence lose its main support, would certainly be a very suspicious one. Omitting the verse, we have in this very section the doctrine of the Trinity just in the form in which Scripture generally presents it: the Father, who witnesses, ver. 9; the Son, who is attested, ver. 6 seq.; the Holy Spirit, through whom the Son is witnessed by the Father, ver. 6*b*: the passage being thus very similar to the narrative of our Lord's baptism.

We have recognised that the leading idea of the entire section, vers. 6–12, is that of the *μαρτυρεῖν*. The whole Epistle rests upon faith in the Son of God: He is to be exhibited in the fulness of His divine attestation; and it is accomplished in such a way that vers. 6–9 present to us the witnesses, vers. 10–12 the effects of the witness. This and no other (hence the *οὗτος* at the outset, resuming the subject of the preceding proposition) is He who came with the powers of a new life which overcomes the world; that is, the Jesus Christ already named. He came: the aorist specifies His coming simply as an historical fact; not marking it as one accomplished event, as if it were *ἐληλυθώς*, nor as something continuous, as if it were *ἐρχόμενος*. The words must be taken in their strict order and meaning: it is not *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*, as if the person were mentioned with a double *nomen proprium*, but *Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός*; the article before *Χριστός*, and only before it, makes it a closer appellative definition of *Ἰησοῦς*, Jesus who is the Messiah. The Messiahship of Jesus is taken for granted; for nothing new concerning this is asserted throughout the section, only the old is confirmed afresh. Moreover, we do not read *οὗτός ἐστιν ἐλθών*, after the manner of John i. 9, *τὸ φῶς ἦν ἐρχόμενον*,—as if, for the sake of more strongly emphasizing the verbal idea, the copula were separated from the verb,—but *οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος*.

Thus the purport of the whole is this: You call Jesus the Messiah; and you are right in this, for it is He who has in Himself the necessary and settled (mark the article) sign of Messiahship: which is, that He has brought the powers of renewal and atonement. By means (*διά*) of the water and the blood He has come; and His coming is comprehended in the water and the blood (*ἐν*). If we abidingly receive these powers of renewal and atonement, then is He no longer *ὁ ἐλθών*: for here we must remember that *ἔρχεσθαι*, spoken of Jesus, does not signify a mere appearing or being born; but, on the ground of the Old Testament, His manifestation as Saviour and Redeemer. And, in very deed, He has the two necessary tokens of a Saviour in Himself: not as it were only the one, that of water (*οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον*). We saw above that in the symbol of water the element of atonement as such is wanting. It refers to the establishment of a new life, and thus looks forward to the future and not back to the past. Past sins are not washed away by water, but only by blood; for *χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσίας οὐκ ἔστιν ἄφεσις*. It is true that this *seems* to be contradicted by Mark i. 4, where the baptism of John is called *βαπτισμὸς μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτίων*. But it is not really contradicted. The baptism is expressly termed *βαπτισμὸς μετανοίας*, having its character in the change of mind; and we have therefore to assume that the forgiveness of sins also comes as the result of the change of mind. It is therefore such a forgiveness of sins as took place in the case of David: viewed as in the future, on the ground of an atonement hereafter to come. The expiatory element was by no means involved in the baptism of John; it implied an act of God's grace standing in no necessary connection with this ordinance. Sins were, in the baptism of John, as generally down to the manifestation of Christ, placed under the *ἀνοχὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ*; but a propitiation was not connected with it, save symbolically through the shedding of blood. Through that propitiation itself was man's sin done away in the sight of God; and hence it is the sign of the true and only Saviour that He came *οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι*

μόνον ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ τῷ αἵματι. By the side of this work of Christ, laying the foundation, comes in the attesting and confirming work of the Spirit. Our Lord's work had its own confirmation in its power to renew and to abolish guilt; but it receives a new and most express confirmation through the Spirit, whose only office is to witness (τὸ μαρτυροῦν), and who possesses the fullest adaptation to this office, inasmuch as He is ἡ ἀλήθεια, the compendium of all truth.

But that which was to be attested is the subject of the first clause, the fact which this testimony makes unassailably secure to faith: Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστος. It is secure, for the condition is fulfilled to which the Mosaic law attaches all security, the concurrence of three witnesses. These are εἰς τὸ ἕν, converge to one goal, that is, the fact already announced and the consequence deducible from it (vers. 11, 12), that we possess in Jesus Christ eternal life. Inasmuch as this goal has been already named, and is known to the readers, it is not said that they merely agree εἰς ἕν, but εἰς τὸ ἕν, that particular end with which the whole was concerned. The mighty force of conviction inherent in these testimonies rests emphatically on this, that they are given not by men, but by God Himself, the source of all truth, ver. 9. The comparison between human and divine witness is suggested to the apostle by ver. 8, in which he had referred to the fact that the testimony adduced by him fulfilled the conditions demanded by valid human testimony. It not only furnishes valid human testimony; it does more than that,—he goes on,—for it springs from God. A corresponding development, fundamental for our passage, is found in John viii. 17 seq. There, our Lord avers that in His case the requirements were met which men are justified in demanding for the guarantee of any truth; here, His apostle goes further, and says that more than this is furnished for Christ. Therefore, as men are wont to receive attested facts without contradiction, and always thus to receive them (Ind. Pres.), so must we yet more heartily yield our assent to truth. Thus the μείζων does not refer to the matter of the testimony, as if

the thing here attested were of greater and higher moment than the things which men attest,—these latter being about *ἐπίγεια*, while God vouches for *ἐπουράνια*,—but simply to the trustworthiness of the witness. For, the apostle says, the question is here essentially of nothing less than a *divine* testimony (the emphasis falls on *τοῦ Θεοῦ*); the witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood of which we speak (*αὕτη, scil. ἡ μαρτυρία*) is only the means by which God Himself testifies.

The clause following these words with *ὅτι* is not to be attached to them by *ἥν*: this appears certain from the evidence of manuscripts, and is confirmed by internal arguments; for, in the first place, we can easily understand the *lapsus oculorum*, which might take up the *ἥν* of the similar words of ver. 10 into our verse; and, secondly, this *ἥν* produces at once the impression of being an explanatory correction. For it is not obvious at first sight whether the *ὅτι* here means "that" or "because." If we take the former, *ὅτι* is the unfolding of the preceding *αὕτη*, and must be translated thus: "it is for us to receive the testimony of God rather than the testimony of man, because (the first *ὅτι*) it consists in this, that God has witnessed concerning His Son." Then the contents or the object of the testimony would establish its higher trustworthiness. But, as we have already remarked, it is impossible to see what significance in that case there is in the contrast between the witness of God and that of man. The divine testimony is for its own sake, and not because it is given to this or that fact, more trustworthy than human testimony. In fact, we might deduce from this view the inference that if God were to give His witness to anything else, His witness would not be more strong than that of man. Hence we must take the second *ὅτι* as causal, and lay the emphasis on the *μεμαρτύρηκε*, to which, indeed, we are led by its prominence in the order of the verse. The meaning then is, that we must receive the witness of God as greater than the witness of men; for (the first *ὅτι*) the question is of a divine testimony, and God *hath* borne witness concerning His Son. The first clause of the verse

thus has two reasons assigned: the first confirms that the matter is of *God's* testimony, the second that it is of a *testimony* of God.

When we go on to observe the injunction to the readers to believe in this testimony, a difficulty arises from its appearing that the witnesses mentioned speak only in the believer. For in whom but the believer does the Spirit speak concerning the Lord, and, to use the Lord's own word, glorify Him? and to whom does the water, the renewing energies which proceed and have proceeded from Christ, witness of Christ, but to him who finds evidence in himself of these invigorating powers, and who is conscious that he has received from Him every inspiration to a new life? The same may be said of the witness of the *αἷμα*, the atonement centred and rooted in Christ. Are not then these witnesses superfluous, witnessing only to those who already believe? Now such a contradiction as seems here to emerge would not, apart from other considerations, be intolerable; for it would not be greater in our passage than in those which speak of our Lord being come as a light to those who sit in darkness; while, on the other hand, those only can hear His voice who are of the truth. But the case is different here. If the subject were, as we presumed, the witness of God in believers, it would not be, as we read here, *μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ Θεός*, but only *μαρτυρεῖ*. As it is, the testimony of God must be a definite and closed testimony, perfected in the past. And such it is in very deed: that the powers of renewal and atonement lie summed up and sealed in Christ, is indeed an historical fact. No one with open eyes can possibly deny that all such energies as have been manifest in the world have without exception resulted from the name of Jesus Christ. No man can gainsay that the Spirit sent to the apostles witnessed to them on behalf of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Thus the testimony of God in its threefold direction is not only one that lives in individual believers, but it stands before us as an incontrovertible historical fact. It is with faith in this testimony of God as it is with faith in the miraculous power indwelling in Christ and in Christianity. He who

has experienced the miracle of sinful man's renewal needs no other witness for the miracles which the Lord aforetime wrought. But has not he to whom this is not a living experience historically before him the great and undeniable miracle that a sunken, dying, ruined world has been awakened through Christ to a new life? Thus, as this one great, undeniable miracle is even to the unbeliever a real demonstration of the miraculous power of Christ generally, so the historically undeniable witness of the water and the blood and the Spirit is obligatory on all who have not as yet experienced it in themselves. In a word, the witnesses here adduced are valid not only to believers, but also for unbelievers; they stimulate and invite faith; for they are not only subjective in men's hearts, but objective also in history.

These observations make the progress of the thought between vers. 6–9 on the one hand, and vers. 10–12 on the other, quite clear. Vers. 6–9 treat of the witness of God as of one that is historically present, completed, and closed (*μεμαρτύρηκεν*). Then in ver. 10 the new thought enters, that if we believe this objectively present testimony, it becomes a subjective one which we find experimentally in ourselves (*ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ*). But he who believes not (*μή*, for the participle is to be conditionally understood, as it were, *ἐὰν μή*) makes God a liar: he charges the historically present testimony of God with falsehood. We see at once how in this proposition we can again expect only *μεμαρτύρηκεν*, and not *μαρτυρεῖν*; for the divine testimony, which has its realization in man, the unbeliever has indeed not experienced.

Now follows the explicit statement of the substance of the witness, which ver. 6 indicated only in few words. That is to say, Jesus is generally attested as the Son of God and the Messiah. At an earlier stage it was impressed on us that these two ideas are regarded by St. John as involved in each other, so that if He is said to be the Messiah, He must be the Son of God; if the Son of God, He must also be the Messiah. The idea Son of God or that of Logos is not in our apostle a mere metaphysical

description of what Christ is in Himself or in relation to the Father: the idea in both its terms stands in an immediate connection with the created universe. In the first verses of the Gospel it is said that all becoming and all being in the world proceed from the Logos,—the former, the becoming, in ver. 3; the latter, the being, in ver. 4,—and it follows from this that He who is the medium of *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* to the world must therefore be the Son of God; and that the Son of God, because it is His to procure and accomplish all, must also be the mediator of salvation,—that is, the Son of God and the Messiah are in St. John's consciousness interchangeable ideas which necessitate each other. Accordingly, the testimony which God here bears concerning His Son cannot be a merely theoretical proposition, *Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*; but it is a proposition in which there lies a thoroughly practical element: to wit, that He, as the Son of God, is the Saviour of the world. Thus it is accounted for that the two phrases are introduced quite *promiscue*, as indicating the object of the testimony: in ver. 6, *Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός*, the Messiahship of Jesus; in vers. 9, 10, by the words *περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ*, His divine sonship. Finally, in ver. 11 both elements are placed in correlation, and thus the whole is summed up.

VERSE 12.

Ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν, ἔχει τὴν ζωήν· ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ ἔχει.

But the apostle does not only say that through Him, the source of life, life has been brought to men generally, but that it has been brought to *us* (*ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεός*). For it is taken for granted in this verse that the witness of God, the historically actual witness, has been received by us, and thus become a *μαρτυρία ἐν ἡμῖν* (comp. ver. 10); in other words, that we have received our portion in the life brought by the Redeemer. The connection between the Son of God and the life, declared in ver. 11, is then in ver. 12 evolved under two aspects: where the Son of God is, there is also life; and it is to be found only where He is. And thus the apostle has come back to the idea which

he had laid down at the outset of his document; in ch. i. 1 he had declared that His annunciation concerned the Logos, but as the λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, that is, the divine and eternal life which is in the Logos, and flows forth from Him. That Son of God and life are correlative terms, is here obviously the conclusion of all his development.

The conclusion it is; for that which now follows is not a continuation of the discussion of ver. 6 seq.: that it is not this is evident from the matter of what follows, in which the μαρτυρεῖν no more appears; as well as from the emphasized resumption of the twelfth verse in the thirteenth, a thing to be accounted for only on the ground that something new is about to be entered on. Nor is what follows a new train of thought, which stands co-ordinately by the side of the previous development. We have rather only a recapitulation yet before us, in which, indeed, the apostle expands one single thought, that of intercession, under one aspect, intercession in regard to the sin unto death. That this close of the whole Epistle falls again into two members is evident at the first glance: vers. 13–17 and vers. 18–21 must be taken together; but it will require a discussion of the details to show in what relation these two sub-sections stand to each other.

Verse 13.

Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχετε, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύητε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

First, we have to decide the reading of this verse. There are three various forms which it assumes. The *Recept.* reads: *ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύητε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.* The manuscript form most generally accepted is that of Cod. A: *ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον οἱ πιστεύοντες εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.* Finally, Cod. B reads: *ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.* The decision between these readings, especially between the

latter two, is, as to external arguments, difficult. The most important question is here, of course, as to which of the readings would most easily suggest the reason for the origination of the others. Now, that is the third. If, namely, the τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, according to Cod. B, stood after the telic clause with ἵνα, we can easily understand how it was that it came to be changed into the nominative, —that is, to refer to the εἰδῆτε (as in Cod. A); and we can also see how those transcribers who rightly viewed the grammatical connection placed it before the intermediate telic clause, immediately after the ἔγραψα ὑμῖν (as the *Recept.*). The second clause with ἵνα, found in the *Recept.*, appears to have sprung from a gloss which the parallel definition of purpose in the Gospel (ch. xx. 21) contained. If we suppose the *Recept.* genuine, we cannot account for the origination of the two other readings; nor will the second of the two readings help us to explain how the first and third arose. Then, if the third reading is the right one, the closing words, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν κ.τ.λ., may be compared with John i. 12, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν κ.τ.λ. Thus the aim of the Epistle is the firm assurance of the readers that they have eternal life; and both the writing and the establishment of this assurance are designed only for those who believe in the revelation (ὄνομα) of the Son of God.

VERSE 14.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παῤῥησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτὸν, ὅτι ἐάν τι αἰτώμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ἀκούει ἡμῶν.

This assurance, that we are partakers of a true and divine life, produces in us παῤῥησία as it respects God,—the sentiment of unity with Him, and therefore of perfect freedom, or the unrestrained and unreserved utterance of our whole thought. But the apostle has not in view here, as in the second division of the Epistle he had, the approval of this confidence at the day of judgment. Here, at the close of all, he points rather to the fruit which this parrhesia already bears in our experience, in the confirmation even now of our possession of the ζωὴ αἰώνιος. It takes the form of

confidence in prayer, founded upon the assurance of being heard. But prayer here comes into consideration only in its intercessory character, as ver. 16 shows. This, however, is not an isolated thought which is made prominent at this point for practical reasons; it will be seen to correspond with the general tone of the Epistle, when we reflect that it regards the whole life of prayer as finding its deep expression in prayer for others. We have seen in previous expositions that St. John subsumes our whole religious life under the one commandment of brotherly love; that he regards our entire moral obligation as discharged in this precept; and hence it is plain that there was to him no other prayer imaginable than that which in its issue should be bound up with our brethren. If I pray for my own person, it is that I may become a living member of the kingdom of God; but my place in the kingdom of God is conditioned by this, that I am helpful to my brethren in that kingdom. Accordingly, the final, at least the indirectly final, end of all prayer —viewed from the point which connects our whole life with the service of the divine kingdom—must be prayer for the salvation of our brethren. The *κοινωνία μετ' ἀλλήλων*, which it was the apostle's aim in ch. i. 4 to help to its perfection, is in its deepest principle fellowship in prayer. It is remarkable that at the close of several of the catholic Epistles we find an exhortation to intercession for sinful brethren. Compare the close of the Epistle of St. James and 1 Pet. iv. 8, *πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.* We may appeal also to Rev. ii. 4, where it is the reproach of this very Ephesian church *ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκεν.* Though, primarily, it is the love of God which there is spoken of as grown cold, yet in our Epistle St. John establishes so close a connection between the love of God and the love of the brethren, that the coldness of the one must needs draw after it, or with it, the coldness of the other.

Our passage, and that of ch. iii. 21 to which it refers back, are not the only ones in which the most intimate connection is established between *παῤῥησία* and prayer.

We may compare also Eph. iii. 12, *παῤῥησία καὶ προσαγωγή*; and Heb. iv. 16, *προσερχώμεθα μετὰ παῤῥησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος*. It must be carefully noted that the apostle does not write that the parrhesia consists in our *knowing* that God hears us, but that it consists in this, that God heareth us. And yet the parrhesia is a subjective feeling, while God's hearing is an objective fact: now this pregnant juxtaposition of the two ideas is intended to make prominent the indissoluble connection between the Lord's hearing prayer and the joy of man in offering it. In all cases in which God heareth, there is necessarily joyful confidence in praying, and never otherwise; conversely, whenever there is this joyful confidence, there is also the *ἀκούειν* of God. It is obvious, however, that supplication *κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ* is the presupposition both of the *ἀκούειν* and of the *παῤῥησία*. By this, indeed, the apostle does not so much mean to warn against carnal requests, such as the sons of thunder addressed once to their Master and received a rejecting answer; in the present connection, spiritual things alone are concerned; the thought of external and temporal matters of desire are far from the apostle's mind; and to introduce them here would be to bring a perfectly foreign element into the train of thought. Ver. 6 sheds the true light on our passage: there is a certain kind of prayer even in spiritual matters which is not according to the divine will; which, therefore, is neither heard by God nor offered with perfect confidence by man.

VERSE 15.

Καὶ· ἐὰν οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃ ἂν αἰτώμεθα, οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἔχομεν τὰ αἰτήματα ἃ ᾐτήκαμεν παρ' αὐτοῦ.

We must, however, consider more carefully the idea of God's hearing. Are we to limit it to mere hearing, or to regard it as a hearing with approval and intent to answer, hearing and granting being one? The fifteenth verse seems to plead for the former; for there the hearing comes first, and afterwards the *ἔχειν τὰ αἰτήματα*, or the granting of the request. But, on the other hand, this general meaning of the *ἀκούειν* has its difficulty: in this sense the God ὃς

γινώσκει παντα (ch. iii. 21) hears all prayers, even those which are not according to His will; consequently this indefinite kind of hearing could never impart confidence in the petitioner. Moreover, it is remarkable that St. John, and he only, employs this very word ἀκούειν in the sense of hearing favourably or granting; comp. John ix. 31, xi. 41, 42. As to the fifteenth verse, we have only to interpret it rightly. It does not mean to indicate the unity of the hearing and the granting of petitions; but the unity of the being heard with acceptance and the reception of what is supplicated. Many petitions κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ are outwardly granted, it may be, after a long season; so granted that their acceptance appears manifest. But—and this is the pith of the apostle's declaration—faith has the thing asked, which probably will not be granted externally for a long time, already inwardly in possession at the moment of asking: in the consciousness that God hears, there is to this believing petitioner the actual ἔχειν τὰ αἰτήματα, the possession of the thing asked, though it may be for a season only in internal experience. As the Christian hope brings the Christian man immediately into possession of the thing hoped for,—so that by virtue of the very hope itself he may inwardly rejoice in the experience of the object hoped for as his own,—so the believing petitioner needs not to wait for the time to come when the fulfilment of his prayer will be an external reality: he has what he asks, he enjoys it already, before he actually sees it. To sum up all: the parrhesia which, within the limits of the present life, a Christian may have, is indeed primarily only a confidence in prayer and an alacrity for prayer (ch. iii. 20),—that is, it does not rest so much upon the having as upon the possibility of future having, upon the fact that the door is opened into all the treasures of heaven. Nevertheless there is, on the other hand, a present sense of having, though it be only in faith and not in sight; for there is a full assurance of the absolutely necessary attainment of the request, which is no other than an internal and spiritual possession of it already. Believing, we have already eternal life,—that is, fellowship with God (ver. 13);

in believing prayer we have—that is, more particularly, in believing intercession—already perfect fellowship with our brethren as members of the kingdom of God (ver. 14 seq.).

VERSE 16.

Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσει, καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωὴν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι μὴ πρὸς θάνατον· ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ·

What follows shows that intercession has for its aim the winning of our brethren for the kingdom of God. But, before we look closely at the link between vers. 16, 17 and what precedes, we must examine the meaning of the verses themselves. What are we to understand by the *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*? At the outset it is clear that the apostle has in view sin which irrevocably shuts the gates of eternal life, the consequence of which is death in its most awful character. That there is such a sin, or that there are such sins, is affirmed by the New Testament in other places (Matt. xii. 31 and parallels; Heb. vi. 4 seq.); and this lies at the foundation of all such passages as proclaim an eternal condemnation. What is peculiar and startling in our passage is this, that our intercession is made to depend upon the question whether or not the sin is *πρὸς τὸν θάνατον*, thus indicating that its character as such may be and is discernible by us. Now our possible knowledge of this absolutely mortal kind of sin may be fairly questioned. In Matt. xii. our Lord sees the Pharisees in the manifest act of committing *a* sin, or *the* sin unto death, *πρὸς θάνατον* (which of the two let us at present leave undecided), because they would assign His works to the inspiration of Beelzebub; but, on the other hand, He prays for His murderers, and therefore did not, according to our present passage, regard the sin unto death as consummate in them: now in these cases would not human eyes have judged the very opposite? Saul heard the rejecting words of the prophet, while David's sin was forgiven; but according to appearances, and therefore so far as men could judge, was not David's sin much heavier than the sin of Saul? And,

to speak generally, it is impossible to decide confidently the greater or less alienation of a sinner from eternal life on the ground of the more or less violent demonstration of his sin as an act. For, even as a hardened sinner may be brought round by the divine grace and saved from destruction, so may a man, devout in the eyes of his fellows, become perfectly reprobate to everything divine. Or are we to assume that there is *one* definite and definable sin which is absolutely *πρὸς θάνατον*? But would not the apostle, in that case, have taken care to warn against it, and to mention it by name? Would he not at least have written *ἔστιν ἁμαρτία τις* or *μία ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*? These difficulties can be solved only by observing what St. John elsewhere teaches concerning the ideas lying before us: first, that of the sin; and, secondly, that of the prayer.

As to the former, it is demonstrable that St. John measures all sin by the relation it assumes to Jesus Christ. In John i. 5 he describes sin to the effect that the *σκοτία τὸ φῶς οὐ κατέλαβε*, and thus places it in direct opposition to the light which appeared in Christ. Our Lord says, in John viii. 24, *ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν. Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν.* He thereby assigns the real ground of death —that is, of eternal death—to the state of unbelief towards Himself. Finally, in John xvi. 9, He defines the judgment or conviction of the Spirit to be this, that He *ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας*; and what sin He has in view appears plain from the subsequent words, *ὅτι οὐ πιστεύουσιν εἰς ἐμέ*. In our Epistle, St. John defines the nature of the Antichrist, who is, however, the Pauline *ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, the incarnation of sin, as that of one who denieth the Son, ch. ii. 21; and also, in ch. iv. 3, as that of one who *λύει Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα*. From all this we must infer that the essential sin, which makes all other sin to be sin, is in the apostle's estimation unbelief in our Lord. And no doctrine is more firmly established in the New Testament than this, that we shall hereafter be judged by the relation in which we stand to the Son. According to the measure in which any act betrays the

mark that this relation subsists aright, or does not yet subsist, or has ceased to subsist, according to the measure in which any action confirms, or interrupts, or entirely dissolves this relation, is the value of that action and its estimation before the divine judgment-seat.

Accordingly, the sin unto death can be no other than consummate enmity to Christ. It is obvious how perfectly this thought is in accordance with the tenor of our Epistle: the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God, Christ and Antichrist, life and death, are the fundamental ideas and inseparable antitheses which govern it throughout. But however clear it is, that in harmony with his general views St. John might have regarded unbelief in Christ as the conclusive and consummate sin, yet this is not here expressly stated; the words have too general a bearing to be a mere paraphrase of "Antichrist;" they lead our minds rather to practical errors than to an intellectual *ἀρνεῖσθαι*. Moreover, while the antichrists, according to the second chapter, certainly *ἐξῆλθαν ἐξ ἡμῶν*, they are at the present time sundered from the church, and no longer are regarded as belonging to it; and those who are the *ἁμαρτάνοντες πρὸς θάνατον* are supposed to be still living in the bosom of the community. The sinner is described as an *ἀδελφός*; and we have seen that throughout the Epistle this name indicates Christians alone. The world comes into St. John's view in this document only as to be avoided; the intercession which may be urged on behalf also of the children of the world is never alluded to here. Thus we have reached the twofold result: first, that, on the one hand, St. John must, in harmony with his whole system of thought, have regarded the determinate sin as apostasy from Christ; and, on the other, that he here at least speaks not of any theoretical denial of Him, and not of any external apostasy. We must not, therefore, accept the sin unto death and the antichrist nature as ideas of the same exact import.

Let us, for the sake of a more thorough understanding of the matter, look at the development of sin in men generally. If every man is consigned in biblical teaching either to salvation or perdition according to his conduct

during his bodily life, it is clear that he must on earth have become ripe for one or the other; that no man dies without *being* a child of heaven or a child of hell. The latter case is then only possible when the accesses of the converting grace of God are effectually closed, and every possibility of its influence cut off; for, so long as this is not the case, the final decision and full maturity cannot be predicated. In other words, every organ for the reception of the Spirit of participation in the kingdom of God must have withered and died; and that moment in which the decision follows, in which the evil principle attains the absolute supremacy, is that which is the essentially condemning crisis. That act, external or internal, which in this crisis is consummate, is the *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*: the sin, which finishes irrevocably the soul's death. It is involved in this, that no deed as such, in virtue of its external character and quality, is the *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*; for no sin—be it named what it may—is in itself too great for the mercy and the might of the Lord; but a sin becomes the *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον* in virtue of the interior quality out of which it springs and of which it gives the fatal evidence. Such a central position, one that determines the whole life of man through eternity, can be assumed by no sin of infirmity; only a sin of presumptuous wickedness, that is, such a sin as is committed in spite of the power to resist it,—such a sin as man commits not only in resistance to the protest of conscience, but in contempt of the gracious power proffered to avoid it,—such a sin as he is not seduced into, but commits in the pure love of sinning: thus it is not simply a human sin, but sin that is essentially devilish.

The Old Testament analogue of our *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον* is found in those passages where sins בְּיָד רָמָה are spoken of, on which rests the curse, הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא נִכְרְתָה. Excommunication from the people of God was in the old covenant what now exclusion from the kingdom of God is. Thus every sinful act *may* be an *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*, while no act is such in itself; hence the apostle does not use the article, nor could he use it. *Ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς*

θάνατον: in the domain of sin there is such a kind as is absolutely mortal. But when Christ calls Himself the door of the kingdom of God, *ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖδα τοῦ Δαβίδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείει, καὶ κλείει καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει*, it is plain that absolute death can be reached only when all relation to Him is broken off. If the apostle, as we have seen, thinks here of members of the congregation, the sin unto death can consist only in their having internally and in act—if it were externally done, and by words, they would indeed be no longer members of the congregation —burst the last bond of their fellowship with Christ. According to John i. 14, Christ brought grace and truth. As truth the antichrists rejected Him, as grace the sinners unto death: more precisely, the antichrists were introduced by the apostle in the aspect of their rejection of Christ the truth; and the sinners unto death in the aspect of their rejection of the grace.

This extended observation has demonstrated that sin unto death does not signify any definite external form of sin, but the sin through which the internal link between God and man is severed and the gulf fixed absolutely. But this infers how difficult it must be to discern whether any man can in such a sense have sinned *πρὸς θάνατον* or not. How then can it be introduced as a test for the offering or the withholding of our intercessory prayer? If this question is not solved by studying the idea of *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*, it may be solved by studying the nature of the prayer. In His last discourses our Lord exhibits prayer in His name as something that the disciples had never hitherto exercised, but which must be unconditionally answered with acceptance. The promise is perfectly unrestricted; if one single exception were possible, the promise would be invalidated. On the other hand, Scripture testifies that many men enter into the way of eternal death: is not a prayer ever to be offered up to heaven on their behalf? According to the Lord's word it stands eternally fast, that *if* such prayer ever did go up *ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ, ἐν παῤῥησίᾳ*, as our passage terms it, that is, if the petitioner ceased to be the mere man, but were the Spirit of

Jesus Christ dwelling in him, and moving his heart to such intercessory prayer; thus, if his petitions were like the petitions of the Lord Himself, already in their essence thanksgivings,—these all being the signs of prayer in the name of Jesus,—then *must* his supplication be heard and answered, and it were impossible that the soul interceded for should perish. It follows, conversely, that if a soul perishes, that soul has never been thus prayed for, and never could have been thus prayed for. Many petitions, indeed, in the ordinary and more general sense may have been offered for him,—such petitions, for instance, as we offer for temporal things, uttering our wishes as children to our heavenly Father,—but not prayers in the name or in the person of Christ, in the full and inwrought consciousness that they are heard, not such prayers as offer violence to the kingdom of heaven. Prayers of the higher order like these are, however, the proper Christian prayers, and such are inwrought of God alone; but He cannot inspire them in regard to men concerning whom He knows that they will perish.

Such considerations as these will help to make our verse intelligible. The apostle says that if any man sees *τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ*, his own brother bound to him by the bonds of the most interior love, sinning,—*ἁμαρτίαν ἁμαρτάνειν* is quite general, without limitation to any particular kind of sin,—and has the conviction (the subjective *μή* is used) that the sin is not unto death, then—and now follows not an exhortation, but a declaration—he will pray, he will, simply because it is his brother, feel himself constrained to pray for him. We must not interpret the future *αἰτήσει*, like the futures of the ten commandments, as the strongest form of the imperative speech; for it must certainly be understood in the same sense as the future *δώσει* near at hand, and that would not tolerate any such imperative meaning. A Christian, the apostle tells us, cannot do otherwise than run by intercession to the help of an erring brother. And, as definitely as this prayer will be offered, the result of it will also be definite, *δώσει αὐτῷ ζωήν*. The subject in *δώσει* cannot be God; that would be harsh, in

immediate view of the preceding *αἰτήσει*, which has man for the subject, especially as God is not mentioned anywhere else in the whole verse. Nor is the thought that man may by his prayer give life to his brother a repellent one; in Jas. v. 20, and in a perfectly similar connection, we read that *σώσει ψυχὴν ἐκ θανάτου*. We have here, therefore, no direct contradiction to the seemingly opposite statement that no man can redeem his brother; for believing prayer, and consequently its result also, the *δοῦναι ζωήν*, rests essentially on divine operation; and impulse from above. The expression *δώσει ζωήν* shows, however, how the *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον* must be taken; to wit, that a sin so named is left to death *irredeemable*. In a sense, every sin must be exposed to death, otherwise there would be no *giving* of life to be thought of. The explanatory words that follow, *τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον*, introduce really nothing new, for the preceding conditional clause has already brought forward the same element; but the repetition is intended to impress more deeply on the readers two things: first, by means of the plural *τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι*, that the result indicated will follow, not in isolated cases, but in every one; and, secondly, that the limitation must be ever remembered which is bound up with it, *μὴ πρὸς θάνατον*.

VERSE 17.

Πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστὶ, καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

What had been in the previous words indirectly said, that there are two altogether different kinds of sin, sin unto death and sin not unto death, St. John now in what follows directly declares, *ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον*. That these two clauses are thus connected is not generally acknowledged; still less is it the common view that the words *πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν* are to be linked with what precedes instead of with what follows. Nevertheless, this view is absolutely necessary. That the two clauses just mentioned correspond to each other in their entire construction, and are in thought

fitted to each other, scarcely needs any demonstration; it is, in any case, enforced upon us when we observe that the proposition *πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν* cannot belong to what comes after. If it did so, we should scarcely see what induced St. John to introduce here the idea of *ἀδικία*: this idea not only has no organic connection with the proposition that all sin is not sin unto death, but it is decisively foreign to it, and somewhat discordant. We should be obliged to take it only in a concessive way: "it is true that all *ἀδικία* is sin; do not think too tenderly concerning *ἀδικία*, it also is *sin*;" but we should expect to read, "it is not sin unto *death*." That, however, we do not read, but only that there is sin which is not unto death. The idea of *ἀδικία* is therefore at once dropped again; and it is entirely irrelevant to the proposition *ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον*. Are we indeed to suppose that the apostle felt himself called to occupy himself with teaching here, in an incidental way and without any necessity, the relation of *ἀδικία* to *ἁμαρτία*?

All is changed, if we connect the words with what goes before: there *is* sin unto death, but to this (mark the emphatic *περὶ ἐκείνης* coming first) my words do not refer; you cannot suppose it the design of my words (*οὐ λέγω ἵνα*) to recommend intercession concerning *it*. There are indeed other cases quite enough, he proceeds, to which your intercessory prayer may find application, *πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν*; wherever there is any measure of unrighteousness, there is sin, and the fit occasion therefore for intercession. Thus the apostle really says that there are sins unto death and sins not unto death. To the former of these two propositions there are added two parenthetical explanations: concerning these sins unto death St. John's exhortation does not treat, he does not speak of them; and the range of sin for which intercession may be valid is otherwise large enough. This is the general bearing of the clauses; they can be fully understood only through a close investigation of the idea involved in *ἀδικία*.

Ἀδικία and *ἁμαρτία* are often regarded as synonyms varied simply in order to define the nature of sin on all

sides: for example, in Heb. viii. 12, *ἵλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ*, where obviously there is no consideration of the distinction in the three expressions respectively. But there are passages where this distinction comes into prominence. *Ἀδικία* is the antithesis of *δικαιοσύνη*, as well in the sense of *justitia distributiva* as in that of *justitia interna*. The former antithesis we find in Rom. ix. 14, *μὴ ἀδικία παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ*; and 2 Cor. xii. 13, *χαρίσασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν*,—that is, pardon me if in this I have been unjust, and dealt with you in a manner not correspondent with *justitia distributiva*. But we find *ἀδικία* much oftener used as the antithesis to *justitia interna*, internal righteousness; and in this sense only is it a synonym of *ἁμαρτία*: in the former sense it is only one species of *ἁμαρτία* as a genus. As *δικαιοσύνη* is one of St. Paul's fundamental ideas, it is in his writings that we find *ἀδικία* most frequently occurring. For its relation to *ἁμαρτία* we may consult Rom. vi. 13, as a leading passage, *μὴ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὅπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ*. Unrighteousness uses the body of man as the means by which it declares itself: this is certainly the sense of *ὅπλα*, even though we should leave undisturbed its proper signification. And the end of this employment of men's members, its result—thus we accept the dative—is the *ἁμαρτία*. This latter, therefore, is the full expression in fact of that former, the form under which the *ἀδικία* in every particular case appears; *ἀδικία* is the mind which suggests the meaning of *ἁμαρτία*, and what it presupposes.

We are carried one step further by the comparison of *ἀδικία* and *ἀνομία*. *Δικαιοσύνη* is the ideal which man should set before him, and *ἀδικία* is disharmony with that; but *ἀνομία* is not simply the falling below a standard or ideal, it is also a violation of right. The idea of obligation is wanting in the *ἀδικία*, but it is present in *ἀνομία*; the notion of guilt inheres in *ἀνομία*, but not in *ἀδικία*. This latter presents the condition of man as one opposed to perfection; *ἀνομία* at the same time suggests that it is one of guilt, because it is *παράβασις*. If the *νόμος* makes sin

exceeding sinful, then *ἀνομία* is the definition of this deepest and most aggravated aspect of sin.

From what has been said, it now appears that *ἁμαρτία* marks out the individual act, or even the total character of the man, as evil; while *ἀδικία* and *ἀνομία* indicate the point of view from which it is thus evil,—that is, either as it is discordant with the idea of *δικαιοσύνη*, or as it is violation of positive law, the *νόμος*. When St. John teaches that *πᾶσα ἀδικία ἐστιν ἁμαρτία*, he intends to say that every instance of declension from the normal character of the Christian, from the Christian ideal, is realized and condensed into *ἁμαρτία*. No man can be *ἄδικος* without *doing ἀδικία*; and the doing of unrighteousness is simply *ἁμαρτία*. The proposition here laid down is in principle equivalent to saying that the corrupt tree must bring forth evil fruits; only that here more emphasis is laid on the fact that *all* unrighteousness, everything not right, that is in man, is at the same time *ἁμαρτία* or positive sin. Every defect of righteousness is concurrently absolute sin; every negative must suggest its corresponding positive; every minus of righteousness employ a plus of sin. Thus the proposition *πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν* indicates how wide a range the idea of sin has. While the definition of each sin as *ἀνομία*, ch. iii. 4, enlarges the meaning of the idea *ἁμαρτία*, our present sentence enlarges its comprehension or range. And thus this proposition is well adapted to the purpose of showing how little the apostle, speaking of intercession, could have thought of sin unto death: there are, indeed, so many sins with regard to which intercession may be applied, that the sin for which it has no validity may be left altogether out of notice.

If this, then, is the meaning of our two verses, it is plain that St. John neither says nor purposes to say anything about the nature of these sins *πρὸς θάνατον*: all he emphasizes is, that intercession and its fruit avail only for sins not unto death. Intercession has only to do with them: that is the deeply important presupposition of the writer, never too much to be considered. That is, when he says *ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα μὴ*

πρὸς θάνατον αἰτήσει καὶ δώσει, this takes for granted that, while only in this case, yet certainly in this case, he has confidence in the intercession being heard. If he had meant to say that only in this case intercession would be heard, he must have written either ἐάν τις ἴδῃ καὶ αἰτήσῃ, δώσει or ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἁμαρτάνοντα, αἰτήσει καὶ δώσει ζωὴν τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι μὴ πρὸς θάνατον; but, as he places the ἁμαρτάνειν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον in the premiss and the αἰτήσει in the conclusion, his meaning can be only this, that prayer must be offered only in case there is no sin unto death involved. The same follows also from the proposition, οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ. If these words of the apostle do not make prayer for sin unto death an *end*, it follows that there was no such prayer, for an end always refers to the attainment of something not present; if he had purposed to inhibit prayer that might be hesitating as to the sin unto death, he must have said λέγω ἵνα μή and not οὐ λέγω ἵνα.

After having thus discussed the details, let us once more glance at the general connection. Supposing a right state of heart (ver. 13), there may be confidence in prayer (ver. 14), in *that* prayer which has in itself the assurance that it is heard (ver. 15). And hence (as the future αἰτήσει asserts) that must and will be offered wherever it is possible, that is, in regard to sins not unto death. How then, in the apostle's meaning, is the sin not unto death to be discerned? By this, that for it and only for it are we to pray,—that is, in the sense of ver. 15, in the name of Jesus and μετὰ παῤῥησίας. Such prayer as this is in the case of sins unto death impossible. For as it is essential to this prayer that it has its energy in God, and accords perfectly with His will, it can never be offered where a man has fallen hopelessly into ruin: when, generally, a man is lost, while this takes place undoubtedly through an act of self-determination, it is also according to God's will, and God cannot possibly by His Spirit prompt to prayer which is contrary to His will. Presupposing that we have the true Christian feeling,—and this presupposition impresses the whole of the conclusion of the Epistle,—I

must feel myself urged to intercede for an erring brother; and when I have this impulse, this constitutes the assurance that his sin is not unto death: in regard to a sin unto death, I may indeed entertain good wishes for a brother, but never offer prayer ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ, μετὰ παῤῥησίας. And where this strong confidence of petition is wanting to the Christian, who as such is filled with vehement brotherly love, and is conscious of freedom from every personal impulse, οὐ λέγω ἵνα αἰτήσῃ: he must not think himself urged by the apostle's words, misunderstanding those words, to offer such a prayer; he must not stimulate his heart to that. Thus our passage is made most aptly to accord with what we have discerned to be the issue of the biblical teaching generally, and specially the Johannaean. St. John gives no external mark of the sin unto death; for this it cannot have, inasmuch as it is not the nature of the sin, but that of the sinner, that stamps its signature on sin unto death. He says only that where there is no sin unto death the Christian (the presupposal that he is a true Christian must be made very emphatic) will offer the true and all-acceptable intercession: wherever, then, such a prayer issues from the full heart there can certainly be no sin unto death. But he says nothing positively as to our relation to sinners unto death: he only declares that he does not exhort to intercession for them; they are for the rest altogether left out of his consideration. Nevertheless, it is plain, however indirectly plain, as well from these words as from the nature of the case, that for such sinners the prayer of acceptance is utterly out of the question.[1]

[1] So far as concerns the general apprehension of our text, comparison with the passages of the Gospels respecting the sin against the Holy Spirit, and that of the Epistle to the Hebrews respecting those who cannot be renewed to repentance, is, strictly speaking, irrelevant. Nevertheless it is an interesting question whether the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and apostasy from grace received are of the same import, and of the same import and comprehension as the sin unto death; or whether this last is the genus of which the others are species. For, that all blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is an ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον seems certain, because the impossibility of forgiveness certainly involves everlasting death; and the same may be said of Heb. vi. But the sins marked out in these passages might be individual

VERSE 18.

Οἴδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ.

We have the close of the Epistle in vers. 13–17. What the Christian receives for himself, the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* in faith, and what it confers on him for the benefit of the brethren, that is, the power to bring them into the kingdom of God by intercession, has been fully and conclusively exhibited. The three verses that follow, which bespeak their internal connection by the thrice-repeated resumption of the *οἴδαμεν* at the beginning of the clauses, give a kind of recapitulation of the three constitutive elements out of which the happy estate of Christians has been constructed, as in the exposition of the whole Epistle so particularly in the summary of

expressions of the sin unto death by the side of others. It is not so, however; but we have in all three places only diverse expressions of one thing; they all have the same range and extent. As it respects Matt. xii. 31 and the parallels, this is proved by the circumstance that these passages and our present one look back to the same Old Testament fundamental declarations concerning the sins בְּיָד רָמָה which are followed by excision. More exactly, Matt. xii. 31 refers back to Num. xv. 30. The Septuagint translates גִּדֵּף there by *βλασφημεῖν*; and the Peschito gives for the *βλασφημία* of Matt. xii. 31 the word standing in Num. xv. in the form of גְּדוֹפִין. Now, if Num. xv. is the original text for Matt. xii., that is very important for the meaning of *βλασφημεῖν* in the latter. That is to say, in Numbers, sins not of word but of act are alluded to, and we must therefore take *βλασφημεῖν* in the wider sense; accordingly in Matt. xii. also the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is intended not of words only, but also of actions. Indeed, it follows from this passage itself that the *βλασφημία τοῦ πνεύματος* is possible without the Spirit being mentioned: the Pharisees were in danger of committing this in the words they had spoken before, in which the Holy Ghost does not occur. To blaspheme the Spirit means to ascribe to the evil spirit that which men might and must acknowledge to be the work of the Holy Ghost; to ascribe it to the evil spirit against their knowledge and conscience, and thus deliberately to harden themselves against the operation of the Spirit. And this very sinning in spite of the knowledge of the truth and the power to follow it, this hardening, is meant in Heb. vi. But all this is essentially the same which, as we have seen, St. John here signifies by the *ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*: for he alone falls unsalvably and irremediably into death who refuses the power of life brought near to him, and absolutely closes his heart against it.

the three previous verses. The first point of importance is to seize the relation of the three clauses to each other. As the γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ of ver. 18 and the εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ of ver. 19 mean essentially the same thing, the element that distinguishes the two thoughts must lie in the second half of the two clauses severally: as to the former, the emphasis rests on this, that the child of God does not sin; as to the latter, on this, that the world lieth in the wicked one. The substance of the first two verses is therefore to this effect: that one born of God is as such withdrawn from sin and the devil; and that one born of God as such stands in opposition to the world subjected to the devil and sin. For the conjunction of the two propositions οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐσμεν and ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται can yield no other meaning than that, in virtue of our assurance touching our being born of God, we know ourselves to be in contrast and opposition to the ungodly world. It would be more in formal harmony with the phraseology of St. John to regard the second clause as not dependent on οἴδαμεν ὅτι, taking it as an independent proposition; but as to the thing itself, it is understood that the evil of the world is also known to us.

The first part of ver. 18 is both in substance and in form a resumption of ch. iii. 9*a*. The apostle is not concerned about what the Christian may be at any supposed period of his militant course, but about what he is according to his vocation and the end of his development. The sinlessness and the perfect antithesis in which he stands to the world are not found in the whole of his history, but are the result of that history. As we during our stage of development still have sin in us, so also the world is not at first wholly surrendered to the power of darkness, but the power of light still more or less works in it; it will, however, finally come to this, that on its part there will be total night, and on the part of the children of God absolute day and light. Concerning this relation between us, which more and more clearly works itself out, we have already the knowledge (οἴδαμεν), we know it as the true and the

right relation. The second part of ver. 18 does not form, like the first, a resumption of a previous statement: it is true that τηρεῖν is common enough in our Epistle, but it has always had ἐντολή as its object; just as in the Gospel this word or λόγος is the ordinary object of the τηρεῖν. A person is the object, as in our passage, in John xvii. 12–16, as also in Rev. iii. 10; but in both cases there is a prepositional definition connected with it: in the former ἐν defines the sphere in which, in the latter ἐκ defines the sphere against which, we are to be defended. In our present passage there is no such closer definition: the child of God keeps himself in the estate of a child of God simply. As to the reflexive form of the sentence, we may compare ch. ii. 3: πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἁγνίζει ἑαυτόν. Generally speaking, sanctification and preservation are elsewhere regarded as God's work in man; but here they are regarded as duty incumbent on man himself: thus the ethical side, that of our freedom, is placed in all the clearer light. This self-preservation is the hindering cause that the devil, ὁ πονηρός, οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ. Probably there lies in the words a remembrancer of Gen. iv., where sin is described as a ravenous thing at the door; and watchful care of self appears to be the means for securing ourselves against it. The seduction of the enemy is only admissible to him who does not rightly guard his house. The ἅπτεσθαι may be taken in the strongest sense: the devil cannot even touch such a child of God, much less carry him off as a prey. Or ἅπτεσθαι may be taken in a broader sense, like the corresponding נָגַע בְּ of Gen. xxvi. 11, Josh. ix. 13, that of inflicting any harm on its object.

Verse 19.

Οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται.

Whilst we thus know ourselves, as the children of God, to be secure against any contact with the evil one, we know, on the other hand, that the world is perfectly under the power of this evil one. Ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ and ἐν τῷ

πονηρῷ are the representatives of the antithesis. It follows from this collocation itself, as also from the analogy with ὁ πονηρός in the previous verse, that the dative is to be here taken as masculine and not as neuter. Further, we are led to this by the fact that πονηρός never occurs as a neuter throughout the Epistle. But this certainly makes the κεῖται ἐν all the more difficult. There is no instance in the New Testament of κεῖσθαι ἐν being connected with a personal name; but Sophocles, *Œdip. Col.* 258, seems to give an illustration: ἐν ὕμμι ὡς Θεῷ κείμεθα τλάμονες. Antigone's meaning is: In you Athenians we, with all our life and hope and expectation, are perfectly bound up; on you depends not only the specific gift which we would have of you, but we ourselves, with all that we are and have, depend on you. So it is here. The world rests on Satan, its whole being as world is constituted by its relation to him; devil and world are ideas so interpenetrating each other, that the latter comes to its full meaning only through the former. It is obvious that the world is to be understood here, as in ch. ii. 15, of the world as pervaded with sin. And ὁ κόσμος ὅλος κεῖται ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, which is more pregnant than ὅλος ὁ κόσμος: it is not that the whole *world* is subjected to Satanic influence; the apostle makes it emphatic that the world *as a whole,* without any qualification or exception, all that is in it absolutely, is under his sway.

Verses 20, 21.

Οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἥκει· καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διανοιαν, ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν· καί ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος. Τεκνία, φυλάξατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων. ἀμήν.

Since the two previous verses are opposed, as *asyndeta,* to the twentieth, which is connected with them by δέ, we may at once infer that vers. 18 and 19 contain in some sense two parallel thoughts, to which ver. 20 presents one that corresponds similarly to both of them. And so we find it. The previous verses alleged that we know in what

relation our divine sonship places us to sin and to the world: here it is unfolded that we are conscious of the ground of this relation to both. Christ by His manifestation has given us the knowledge of Him that is true, and thereby furnished us with the right view of our relation to God and the world. This we have in the *διάνοια*, and with it the relation of ver. 20 to what has preceded. The word *διάνοια* comes most frequently before us in Old Testament quotations, where it is, as generally or often in the Septuagint, the translation of לֵב or קֶרֶב. But in all instances of its occurrence, apart from such an Old Testament foundation, it seems to have a narrower signification, corresponding to its conjunction with *διά*, that of the discerning and distinguishing thought, or the faculty of distinction. This it is most clearly in 2 Pet. iii. 1: the apostle would stimulate the *εἰλικρινὴς διάνοια* of the church *ἐν ὑπομνήσει*, by means of its remembrance. The *εἰλικρινής* itself suggests the gift of discernment: it signifies that which approves itself pure under the keenest test (*κρίνω*), under the light of the sun (*εἵλη*, cf. *ἥλιος*). And the same meaning is confirmed by its connection with what follows: the church should distinguish, by means of their discerning faculty, the teaching of the false prophets from the true apostolical *παράδοσις*. Similarly, in Eph. iv. 17, the *ἐσκοτισμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ* are those whose faculty of discernment was so obscured that they had lost any standard for the distinction of good and evil, divine holiness and worldly corruption. The *ματαιότης τοῦ νοός* consists in this, that the Gentiles had absolutely no sentiment of the baseness of the change between the divine life and utter impurity (*ἀπηλγηκότες τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ*). It is not otherwise in 1 Pet. i. 13, where the *ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν* as predicate to *τελείως ἐλπίσατε* indicates that the church must, by a keen and sure discrimination (*διάνοια*), sever all other objects from their hope, and hold fast to that of the revelation of Christ. This special meaning of *διάνοια* comes out with less precision in the two other passages, Eph. ii. 3 and Col. i. 21. In the former, the plural permits only a more general reference; it is obvious that the *διάνοια* must not

be referred to the various individuals, as if the διάνοια were ascribed to each of them, but the plural διανοιῶν must be referred to each individual. In Col. i. 21, however, it should be observed that the pregnant expression ἐχθρὸς τῇ διανοίᾳ does not so much signify that the soul is the seat or sphere of the enmity, as that the ground of the enmity lay in their own thinking and in their own personal decision, so that the meaning we considered above glimmers through this text also. But as to our passage in this Epistle the meaning of discerning faculty admirably suits, and it alone suits. Christ has given us διάνοιαν, not τὴν διάνοιαν: not the fulness of all spiritual ability had been imparted to man, but, as the absence of the article shows, with reference to the particular point in question, the power to discern the true God, and to recognise, as opposed to Him the true God, the false gods (εἴδωλα).

But this knowledge is also the ground of that other, by which we know ourselves as God's children to be separated from sin, while the world on the other hand lies in the wicked one. Thus our verse approves itself to be the foundation on which the two former rest. The central and fundamental fact is by δέ set over against them, as they are the consequences of it; while at the same time the particle defines this to be the supreme matter. This διάνοια is, more closely examined, the gift of the Son of God who has come: ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἥκει. Christ is here described as the Son of God, because He alone as ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς (John iii. 13) can impart the knowledge of the Father; which knowledge, however, He has imparted by the very fact of His coming. He that knows Him who has come has received thereby the gift of διάνοια; for he acknowledges Jesus as the light, and has come to a clear perception about light and darkness generally. The gift of διάνοια enables us to know τὸν ἀληθινόν.

This expression is an elect one of St. John, for we find it very seldom outside of his writings. It is not synonymous with ἀληθής. We have perceived in ἀληθής and ἀλήθεια an absolute property, but ἀληθινός is a relative idea, and

signifies what corresponds to its name and the nature that name expresses. The present passage refers back to John xvii. 3: *αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος, ἵνα γινώσκωσί σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.* Not only have we in our verse the *ἀληθινὸς Θεός* again and His Son Jesus Christ, but also the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, and that in both cases as the gift of the Son of God. The Father is here termed *ἀληθινός* without the addition of *Θεός*: He is the Being who alone in the highest degree corresponds with His name. But not only do we know to discern Him as the True from all *dis ficticiis;* we are also in this only true God (*καί ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ*), and that in virtue of our being in His Son (*ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ*). For it is impossible on grammatical and logical grounds to refer the second *ἀληθινός* as it were to Christ, and to interpret: "we are in Him that is true, that is, in His Son Jesus Christ," as if the second *ἐν* were in explanatory opposition to *ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ*. When we simply hear the two propositions, "we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true," it is the most obvious thing to understand in both cases Him that is true of the same subject. And how very harsh would be the apposition: "we are in Him that is true,—that is to say, in His Son, the Son of Him that is true." The same meaning, that we now in fellowship with Christ have also fellowship with God, is obtained by our interpretation; only that the clause is much more simple, if we take the second *ἐν* as a statement of the means through which we attain to the *εἶναι ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ*.

But the question whether Christ is here called *ἀληθινὸς Θεός* is not yet settled. It has to be determined whether the *οὗτος* of the next proposition refers to the locally and immediately preceding subject, *υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, or to the more distant antecedent God. Taking the former view, there arises the difficulty, never yet solved by any one, that Christ, after the Father has just been called *ὁ ἀληθινός, sc. Θεός*, could be termed, indeed, *ἀληθινὸς Θεός*, but not *ὁ ἀληθινός*. Further, a testimony to the one true God seems more in harmony with the final warning against idols than

a demonstration of the divinity of Christ: the former and not the latter forms the true antithesis to idols. Against the reference of οὗτος to God, appeal has been made to the distance of this antecedent, as well as to the tautology which would issue from three repetitions of the same thought. This last reason in particular would have some weight if οὗτος were a simple resumption of the one idea ἀληθινός; for the idea then resulting, "This true God is the true God," is, in fact, tautological enough. But it is otherwise if οὗτος refers to all that had been said of God before: "this God, whom Christ has taught us to know, and with whom through His Son we have been brought into living union, is the true God." Then the proposition is not pure tautology; but it emphasizes at the close that only that God has a claim to the name just assigned Him of true, who has been made known in Christ to the world and to the individual Christian. This view is supported by the fundamental text of John xvii. 3, where the knowledge of God and that of Christ are exhibited as equal factors in eternal life, just as here; only that, while there they are presented together as simply co-ordinate, here the internal relation of the one to the other is indicated (ἐν τῷ υἱῷ κ.τ.λ.). The connection is also distinctly in favour of it. Our Epistle is directing its final address to Christians, and in its own way demands of them what another author speaks of as ἀφεῖναι τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς λόγον and the φέρεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα: this being so, its last exhortation to keep themselves from idols could not refer to gross idolatry; such a dehortation would most inharmoniously fit the tenor of the whole document. The εἴδωλα are rather the ideas entertained of God by the false prophets of whom the apostle has spoken, the antichrists, who, because they have not the Son, have not the Father also, without being therefore atheists in the common meaning of the word. But the antithesis to their εἰδώλοις is not Christ the Logos, but the Father revealed in the Son. All the heretics of that time would serve God. Against them is held up the proposition that οὗτος, that is, this God revealed in Christ, is alone the true God, all else is an εἴδωλον. But not only is God robbed of His honour;

not only does man serve a false god when he seeks another God than the God revealed in Christ; but he also trifles away his own salvation, for this only is eternal life (the article before *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* must be struck out): he that hath Him hath thereby life. He hath, according to John v., the life in Himself; and the life which the Son has and is, is *πρὸς τὸν πατέρα* as it is *παρὰ τοῦ πατρός*. There is not the slightest difficulty in the fact that the Father is here described as *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, whilst elsewhere the Son is so described; on the contrary, this is in harmony with the close of the Epistle. In its beginning the apostle set out with the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* which the *λόγος* is, and which is in Him; here all flows back to the primal source of all life, to whom the *ἀπαύγασμα καὶ χαρακτὴρ ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ* has opened the way of access, and with whom He has placed us in fellowship, *ἵνα ᾖ ὁ Θεὸς πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν*. But this supreme end must be firmly maintained, there must be no recession from it: every moment that we forget that only the God revealed in Christ is *ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος* would place us in fellowship with the *εἰδώλοις*. Hence the penetrating word of the apostle is a warning to avoid them.

The first glance shows that the last verses (18–21) are not designed perfectly to recapitulate the entire contents of the Epistle. There is not in them any reference to brotherly love, which has nevertheless made up half the substance of it down to the close. But this, indeed, has come into consideration only as the expression of a true relation to God and the means of obtaining it. From this last everything flows, and to it everything leads. Hence we have in these last verses a final emphasis laid on the fundamental principles on which the Epistle rests: that we through the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ have fellowship with God; that this fellowship protects us from sin, and establishes us in a relation of perfect opposition to the world. But, indeed, the threefold plural *οἴδαμεν*, the consciousness of *common* relationship to God as His children, suggests the principle and always energetic impulse to brotherly love; and thus this common consciousness, as containing in itself

the bond with God and with our brethren, is the pledge of the χαρὰ τετελειωμένη which the apostle promised in the beginning of the Epistle to bring to maturity, and to maturity through the establishment of fellowship with God and the brethren.

GENERAL REVIEW.

A TWOFOLD aim has been pursued in the preceding study of our Epistle. First, we have endeavoured to find in itself its process of thought. But if we have perceived rightly what the apostle says to the churches, we have now to pursue the inquiry whether certain results cannot be established in regard to the origin of the document: as to the end for the sake of which, as to the immediate occasion by reason of which, it was written. It is only when it organically connects itself with a definite time to our thoughts that we can claim to have understood it. But, again, our illustration of the details of the Epistle has sought to ascertain whether the dogmatic and ethical statements which it contains may not enable us to argue out the collective system of thought held by the author, so that we may have a clear figure of its intellectual and spiritual physiognomy. To this end it was necessary that such passages should not only be looked at in the light of their meaning in every particular connection, but that they should be detached from their context, and the premises and conclusions indicated on which they rest and to which they lead, in order thus to find out the place they assume in the general system of the author's theology. Certainly we do not intend to say that the apostle had formed for himself a completed system in our sense of the word; but at the same time it is not only an unobjectionable, but also a necessary assumption, that one unified view lay at the root of all the particular passages, and gave the colouring to these expressions. For whosoever, generally speaking, in the full sense of the word, thinks,—and who can deny this full sense

to our apostle?—must have, though often unconsciously, a principle from which his specific thoughts flow: there must be an organic connection in his thinking. And just in proportion as the view has come to be very generally accepted that the writings of the New Testament are mostly occasional writings, aiming not at laying down a dogmatic system, but containing only occasional utterances concerning Christian dogmas in the interest of practical ends, in that proportion is it necessary to ascertain exactly what material they at least indirectly furnish for a dogmatic system, and what aid they at least indirectly contribute to the construction of such a system. The building materials which we have collected in these two several directions must now be in conclusion laid together; and from the detailed features we have made our own we must form the picture as a whole.

THE CHAIN OF THOUGHT.

In this interest let us first of all glance over the process of thought in our Epistle. At the very outset, its introduction (ch. i. 1–4) gives us our right position as to its contents. We had in the first verses two series of ideas to distinguish. One specifies the object that was to be treated of: it is the ζωὴ αἰώνιος, which is the Logos, and which He by His manifestation has brought. The other expresses the certain assurance of this object as an irrefragable truth. Both series are found recurring in the body of the Epistle: the message concerning the substance and the obligations of the ζωὴ αἰώνιος forms the contents from ch. i. 5 to ch. v. 5; the assurance of what is delivered is resumed in ch. v. 6–12, pointing back to the beginning. After what manner and form the ζωὴ αἰώνιος communicated to us must manifest and approve itself, the apostle describes in such a way that two *principia divisionis* are interwoven in his treatment. On the one hand, he adduces the expressions of this life as towards God, on the other as towards man: this gives one principle of division. Again, we derive

much aid in tracing the process of the thought throughout the Epistle from the following ideas, *περιπατεῖν ἐν φωτί, ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὁμολογεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.* It appears at a glance that the two ideas in the heart of the four are more closely united than the others, expressing only two definite sides of the one character of the life, that of the deed and that of the word: hence the four may be reduced again to three. Around this triplicity are grouped in fact the individual parts of the Epistle; and in such a way that within each section the above-mentioned principle of division furnishes the sections: the principle, namely, of relation to God first, and then relation to the brethren.

The first part demands as evidence of the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* communicated to us the *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί.* This is, as we have seen, an altogether general expression, which denotes the sphere of life in which we are supposed to be conversant, embracing the aggregate of the Christian moral condition. The *περιπατεῖν* refers to all the collective and each individual outgoing of the life, not only in word and work, but also in the very thoughts: the whole is supposed to be dipped in light and by light evoked. But light is the description of the divine nature: therefore our whole life—this is the burden of the requirement to walk *ἐν φωτί*—is to be a life in God, in the kingdom of light; the light is to be the centre of all, yea, the spring from which all the energies of this life take their rise. Accordingly this first part of the Epistle is altogether general. It falls into three sections: ch. i. 6–ii. 2; ch. ii. 3–13; ch. ii. 14–27. The first of these tells us that the walk in light as towards God must show itself as sinlessness; the second, that towards the brethren it must approve itself as brotherly love; and the third, that towards the world opposed to Christ it must have an absolutely opposed relation. Each of these three sections is again carried out in three sub-sections. The sinlessness which God requires is brought to effect first positively through the redemption or deliverance from sin which we obtain through the death of Christ; then negatively through the forgiveness of past sin which is acknow-

ledged as such. Both these aspects are recapitulated in the third sub-section, ch. ii. 1, 2, which assumes the hortatory tone. Similarly the second section, treating of brotherly love, has three sub-sections. We perceived in dealing with the details that the apostle leads in the exhortation to brotherly love gradually, by a progressive advancement exhibiting this as the substance of *all* the divine commandments. First, he describes the divine will quite generally as ἐντολαὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, then he carries back these ἐντολαί by the phrase λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ to their internal unity, for he at the same time in the supplementary clause, τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν,—that is, love as it is in God is then also in us,—points out what concrete commandment this unity forms. He further defines this love more closely as περιπατεῖν καθὼς Χριστὸς περιεπάτησεν, and, describing it as the new commandment, closes with the exhortation so to practise it as Christ in His passion practised and taught it. Then the first sub-section (ch. ii. 3–5) speaks of love as of the old commandment; it describes it as union with the divine will (ἐντολαὶ Θεοῦ) and as union with the divine nature (τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν). The second sub-section (ch. ii. 6–11) leads over to love as the new commandment. In it is at the same time shown what connection exists between love and the walking in light, this latter being the ruling idea of the whole. If, namely, Christ in His whole life announced on the one hand that God is light, and on the other exhibited in this His life a great practical demonstration of love, it follows that walking in light is no other than walking in love. The third sub-section has, like the corresponding one in the first section, a hortatory tendency: it reminds the churches that the apostle in writing to them assumed their already standing, the old as well as the young, in the possession of a Christian life (ch. ii. 12, 13). And this very presupposition (ch. ii. 13, 14) is also the transition to the third section. The first sub-section warns against fellowship with the kingdom of darkness: whether the world in general opposed to Christianity; or the antichrist opposition in particular,—that is, the world as it will be born afresh out

of Christianity itself (ch. ii. 15–19). The second sub-section declares that the church is through the possession of the χρῖσμα separated from this kingdom of darkness and furnished with the means of knowing and detecting it: this holy oil of anointing can and will keep them secure with their God and their Saviour (ch. ii. 20–26). The third sub-section (ch. ii. 27) sums up all again for the sake of laying vehement emphasis upon what had just been said. Thus to the apostle the first general requirement of walking in the light took a threefold form of development: the light approves itself in relation to God and before the brethren; but also in opposition to the unchristian world, and as hatred against this, which means fidelity (μένειν) towards God.

But now the apostle proceeds a step further. A general walk or conversation in light, in such and such a specific atmosphere, is not all the obligation that the possession of ζωὴ αἰώνιος entails upon us: we have been thereby not only translated into a new sphere of life, but also inwardly renewed and ourselves thoroughly transformed. The φῶς has entered into us; we have been born of God. This idea of the divine begetting rules the whole treatment from ch. ii. 18 to ch. v. 5: it is this which, at the end of the part thus defined, at the beginning of the fifth chapter, is taken up again; thus by the resumption marking the limits of the part of the Epistle we now consider. In order to show what obligations on us are included in the γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, the apostle resorts for aid to the mediating idea of παῤῥησία. At the appearing of Christ for judgment, that which is within us will be made manifest; and we shall have therefore to prove ourselves whether the total transformation of our nature which is required has taken place: more precisely, whether the δικαιοσύνη, which constitutes the divine nature, is approved also in us. The deed is, however, the standard of the being, and therefore our being the children of God must be demonstrated by our acts; while, on the other hand, the principle from which our act springs furnishes a standard of judgment with regard to it, and therefore the works of

righteousness must approve themselves as having sprung from the Spirit of God. To sum up, the divine birth, or inward renewal, gives evidence of itself only in two ways: one, that itself governs and transforms all our *action;* the other, that this action may be traced back to the Spirit of God, as the Factor of the new birth. The former is the substance of ch. iii.; the latter, of ch. iv. 1–16. Then there is added a retrospective conclusion, ch. iv. 17, 18, which lays stress upon this, that where these two postulates are both found the parrhesia or confidence enters certainly and infallibly. The second part is in two aspects an advance upon the first. Primarily, we have in the first chapters to do with walking *in the light,* and thus with belonging to the kingdom of God, and being moulded by its influences; but here we have to do with the divine birth, and thus with a power which makes us individually into members of this kingdom of God. Then, secondly, there the question was of *walking* in the light, and therefore of the universal bearing and tendency of the life; here the question is of the concrete *expressions* of this walk, the tokens of the divine birth which meet the eye.

First, for the demonstration of sonship to God in act, which is exhibited in two directions: in relation to God it is a doing of righteousness (ch. iii. 1–10), in relation to the brethren it is the office of love (ch. iii. 11–18); and then comes the *resumé* in ch. iii. 19–23. Our act Godward is shown in two sub-sections: first, ch. iii. 1–3, we have the necessity of *ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην.* In eternity we shall be like the Lord, as He is; the way thither is the same which He took in His process of glorification: that is to say, all depends on our being like Him as He *was,* in avoiding sin, and doing righteousness. The second sub-section, ch. iii. 4–10, more closely explains the meaning of this requirement: the righteousness must be pure and simple, since every residuum of sin would manifest us as still belonging to Satan.

Secondly, for the other side, the approval of our sonship to God by the acts of brotherly love is similarly illustrated in two sub-sections: in ch. iii. 11–15, it is the negative

antithesis to the hatred which is the signature of the world; in ch. iii. 16–18, it is positive, and emphasis is laid upon the importance of actual *doing* which has as its fundamental characterization the spirit of τιθέναι τὴν ψυχήν. The third sub-section deduces a *resumé* from the former,—that is to say, the consciousness of actual brotherly love, to wit, the exhibition of sonship to God in some measure at least, may amidst the manifold accusations of our heart comfort us so far as we thereby discern that we have made a sure beginning, while, indeed, the full confidence depends upon the completeness of the ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην.

But to this divine sonship belongs not only a certain doing, but also a specific source of that doing,—that is, the Spirit of whom we are born and from whom our deeds must spring. That the idea πνεῦμα, ἐξ οὗ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν and the idea γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ are substantially the same is evident from ch. iii. 4: the reception of the Spirit makes us children of God. In the acknowledgment that our salvation rests upon the divine act in the mission of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, being thus divinely wrought, and in the acknowledgment, on the other hand, that our good relation to the brethren is certainly divinely wrought too, inasmuch as the love that God has flows into us,—the acknowledgment, in short, that our whole life, as well in its relation Godward as in its relation towards the brethren, purely and absolutely rests upon the divine act,—we have the demonstration that the deeds demanded in the third chapter have their source in the principle of our sonship to God. Where, then, these two marks are found, the required course of action and the consciousness as to their divine origin, there is the evidence adduced of the γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ. The section we have now considered also divides itself again into three sub-sections. The first, ch. iv. 1–6, so unfolds the thought that our fellowship with God rests upon a divine act, as to show that only through our acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God wrought by the Holy Ghost is such a fellowship with God possible, while without it we are surrendered to the pseudo-prophetic spirit. The second sub-section, ch. iv. 7–12, unfolds the parallel thought

that our brotherly love also is based on the divine causality, in such a manner as to show, or by showing, how all human loving is not an independent activity, but is only a reflection and effluence of the divine nature of love. The third sub-section, ch. iv. 14–16, recapitulates the two former.

When at this point, ch. iv. 17, 18, the apostle introduces afresh the idea of the parrhesia or confidence, which he first laid down in the theme-clause, ch. ii. 29, and took up again in the *resumé*, ch. iii. 19, it is made clear, as already remarked, that we have from ch. ii. 28 to ch. iv. 18 one whole, the two parts of which must have had in the spirit of the author an internal bond of connection.

Up to this point we have had two main parts to distinguish, the themes of which were *περιπατεῖν ἐν φωτί* and *γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* respectively. Both these were unfolded according to two aspects: in each came clearly into consideration the relation to God and the relation to the brethren. The internal coherence and unity of these two relations is evinced copiously in ch. iv. 19–v. 5: in each of them the leading principle of the other is already involved. That is to say, ch. iv. 19–21 contains the evidence that in the idea of love not only the relation to the brethren, but also that to God is rooted; ch. v. 1–5 contains the evidence that in the idea of faith not only the relation to God, but also the relation to the brethren is included. And, in order to exhibit the internal unity of the whole material of this section, St. John introduces also here the relation to the *κόσμος*, demonstrating in ch. v. 4, 5 that this, too, follows from the idea of faith.

At the outset of this summary, we pointed to the fact that the ideas *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί, ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὁμολογεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ*, pervade the entire Epistle. It has been shown that the first is the representative of the development in ch. i. and ii.; the second and third rule the two parts of the second main division; not till the last section does the *πίστις* come in. There is a progression in these ideas which will not escape our notice, particularly in the last three. While the first of them refers to the acts, the second refers

to the word, the third to the heart or centre of the life. It is true that in the ὁμολογεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν of ch. iv. the predicate, the avowing or confessing, recedes behind the object confessed: the apostle lays all the stress not upon the form, the confessing, but upon the importance of what is confessed. But there is good reason for his adopting as the predicate ὁμολογεῖν instead of using the term πιστεύειν. For it was his object in the second leading part, according to the distribution given at the outset, to show upon what the *consciousness* of sonship to God rests: not this latter in itself, but the consciousness of it, can alone produce the affection of confidence. This, however, rests not upon the objective reality of the Divine Spirit in me, but upon the subjective consciousness of it in my heart, which is brought to consummation in the ὁμολογεῖν. But at the close, where the apostle is unfolding that the relation to God and the relation to the brethren are inseparably and most inwardly one, each involving the other, it is naturally not his object to choose any term which should exhibit the external confirmation of the one or the other relation: he must exhibit this itself in its inwardness. Hence at this point the πίστις begins to predominate in the discourse, the other words only revolving around these as pendants. It is the idea of faith which, as the Gospel shows, is central to St. John. The Epistle, too, knows no other than this: γράφω ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἵνα πιστεύητε, which we may place in distant analogy with the Pauline ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν. The document, which demonstrates in its general course how faith must express itself and be confirmed or approved, comes back at its close to the exhibition of all as the expression and influence of faith.

We come now to the closing section of the Epistle. Two series of ideas, as we have seen, were excited in the readers by the introduction: there was an annunciation to be made concerning the Logos as the source and giver of life; and, on the other hand, this announcement was declared to be one raised above doubt. This latter point, the guarantee of all, the apostle has yet to unfold. He now reverts to the idea of the μαρτυρία, which in ch. i. 1–3 was made

so prominent. The witnesses, ch. v. 6–9, and the effects of these testimonies, ch. v. 10–12, now occupy his attention.

There remains still the conclusion, which corresponds with the introduction. It also resolves itself into three sections. The first, ch. v. 13–17, once more specifies the substance of that eternal life of which the Epistle treats: it consists of faith in the Son of God, of love as towards the brethren, which preserves them in the kingdom of God by intercession. The second gives in three clauses the signature of the child of God as opposed to the child of this world (ch. v. 18–20). The third, ch. v. 21, sums up in a hortatory warning the entire practical aim of the entire treatise.

As it has now been made clear, the whole Epistle is almost entirely and down to its details governed by a threefold distribution: only here and there does the thought develope itself in two members, while for the most part even then a synthetic or recapitulatory member is added. It is true that occasionally theories of number have been abused in regard both to the Old and to the New Testament; and mistrust as to what might suggest them may indeed be justifiable. On the other side, it is impossible to deny that in the formal presentation and construction of Scripture definite numbers play their part. And, as it respects our present case, it is to us a pledge of correctness that the observation of a certain triplicity in the Epistle arose out of the *resumé* of the whole, and did not, as it were, prejudice us at the outset, and thus insinuate itself into the pursuit of its chain of thought. That Luthardt long since established the fact that the number three is a divisor in the Gospel, though without exhibiting it in such detail as we have done here, was remembered by the author only afterwards. However, the remark often already made may be made once more, that we are by no means to think that the writer of this treatise adjusted beforehand a scheme in such number and measure. The order and symmetry, which pervade all down to the minutest detail, only show how clearly and sharply the apostle was accustomed to think; and that, in consequence of an

inherent sense of order, his thoughts grouped themselves with facility in a definite way.

OCCASION AND AIM OF THE EPISTLE.

Does this account of the general contents of the Epistle give us any light for the discovery of its occasion and purport? There is evidently no direct obvious connection between the two; but this should only make us examine all the more narrowly whether or not the process of thought affords at least some indirect aid for the discovery of the general aim. And, first of all, the impression produced upon the readers by the Epistle as a whole suggests a helpful intimation. We easily perceive, for instance, the contrast in which its collective substance places it to the other epistolary writings of the New Testament, especially the Pauline. While these latter always bear and everywhere show the character of documents that lay the foundation and organize, that is, have a creative character, our Epistle has rather the character of sustaining, nourishing, and building up. The former have to do with the basis, the latter with the superstructure. Not only in the Epistle to the Romans, which has most distinctively the fundamental stamp, the apostle in it showing the church how he viewed and how he executed his apostolical function, but in all his Epistles we hear the man speak whose it was to give the congregations their first organized formation: as to doctrine, as to constitution, as to ethics, as to all, he has to prepare the soil for something new. His writings have the universal characteristic of teaching. But it is this very characteristic which is wanting throughout St. John's Epistle: from beginning to end it is entirely restricted to the reminding tone. As in the first part of it the apostle again and again intimates that he writes to the church only under the presupposition of their Christian estate and character (ch. ii. 12 seq.); that they need no instruction of any kind, having themselves the χρῖσμα (ch. ii. 20, 27); so towards the end of it he

again reminds them that his document was calculated only for believers (ch. v. 13, *γράφω ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν*).

Apart from these individual expressions of the writer, we have ourselves observed that it is the character of the Epistle everywhere to exhibit the new as the old, the instruction now given as already known, the ethical demands made as already in the act of being fulfilled by them. Similarly the idea of the *τελείωσις*, particularly of the *τετελειωμένη χαρά*, points to the fact that the apostle has nothing in his view but to crown the edifice. This characteristic of his document may be simply called the reminding style in contradistinction from the teaching and elementary style of St. Paul which lays the foundation.

Now this difference itself in the tone indicates the difference in the position of affairs for which our Epistle is adapted, as compared with that in the Pauline congregations. To the same conclusion we are led by another consideration, that the relation of the church to the world outside of Christianity, whether Jewish or Gentile, at the time of our Epistle had become altogether a different thing from that which meets us in the earlier documents of the New Testament. In the time of St. Paul, it was matter of importance to come to an understanding with each of these powers and to be clear of both: temptations came specifically from each. In our Epistle this separation of interest was fully accomplished, and the world is entirely overcome: not, indeed, in the sense that it was no longer present, but that a total and firm severance had taken place externally.

First of all, the distinction between the two distinct camps of the enemy had vanished away: they are now comprehended under the one common term *κόσμος*. With St. Paul the notion predominates that Judaism was the ancient kingdom of God, which in no other form than this had lived through the ages and survived, having become opposed to Christianity only because it spasmodically held fast the obsolete, the old things which *ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ ἐστιν*. With him, therefore, Judaism is a mission field co-ordinate with heathenism, and of the same importance. Now, with St. John, Judaism has utterly lost its independent position,

and relations, and meaning. The expressions ὁ κόσμος and ὁ κόσμος οὗτος, which, when St. Paul uses them, we immediately feel ourselves constrained to connect *primarily* with the Gentile world, are, when St. John uses them, descriptions of *all* that is outside of Christianity: he knows nothing now of the old distinction. With this his Gospel corresponds. In it also Judaism is simply a power entirely opposed to Christ; in it also we find Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately blended in the common word κόσμος. It is true that in ch. i. 9, 10 Judaism is, as equivalent to οἱ ἴδιοι, distinguished from the κόσμος as a whole; but elsewhere, and generally, Jesus is represented not as the Messiah of the Jews, but as the σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου. He announces Himself to Nicodemus as the Saviour and Judge sent not to Judaism, but to the κόσμος, in which the Jews are included and merged. In His last discourses our Lord speaks only of the hatred of the world, although He has to do immediately with the hatred of His own people. Thus there is no longer any difference between the world of Judaism and the Gentile world; both are summed up in the idea of the κόσμος. This is the first thing that strikes us.

But, further, the Christian relation to this κόσμος is noteworthy. It is undoubted that the application of this idea in St. John is in harmony with the current of New Testament phraseology so far as it is mostly referred to the world of mankind, while in such a way as not to refer to them alone or to them as such. Not mankind alone: for man is such, not as contrasted with the collective earthly nature and economy, but as its head. The inanimate creature also belongs to the κόσμος; for, when we read of a βίος τοῦ κόσμου (this world's goods), of εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, and μισεῖν τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, all this we understand not merely of men, but also of all created things. Nor is it mankind as such: for that mankind only is thus denoted which is depraved by sin and in bondage to it. But such a meaning the word always has, even when the expression is not made complete, as ὁ κόσμος οὗτος, as is relatively very often the case in St. John.

Even when *ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἶναι* describes a life merely lived upon earth, as in ch. ix. 5, 39, the idea first referred to is still involved in the world. All this is undoubtedly true, so far as the use of the word goes, which is common to St. John and the rest of Scripture.

St. John, however, has this peculiarity, that with him this fallen world only seldom comes into view as the object of salvation. It is true, indeed, that with him also the Lord appeared in order to redeem the world, fallen under the empire of sin and guilt. He is called the *σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου* (John iv. 42; 1 John iv. 16), and *ζωὴ τοῦ κόσμου* (John vi. 52), and finally, *ἱλασμὸς περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου*. Yet it is still more frequent with him to represent the world, not as a missionary sphere, and therefore as an unchristian territory which must be christianized, but as the principle which opposes the church of Christ in rigid and cold enmity, in short, as the *anti*-Christian kingdom. Especially marked is this style of thought in the Lord's last discourses and in our Epistle, between which generally the points of contact are so exceedingly many. The world is not the sea which contains good fishes *and* bad; it is the sphere and abode of total darkness. It is this which we meant when we spoke above of the severance with the world being complete: Christianity and the world have become *absolute* opposites. And it is to be observed that this deep antithesis is not emphasized in the manner of an urgent warning and exhortation to avoid and be on their guard against the world; wherever the world is mentioned in our Epistle, it is in a tone which suggests the tranquil feeling of entire and final severance. The evil of the world or its wickedness is not complained of nor lamented: it is a simple fact, which cannot be otherwise than it is. When we consider the way in which St. Peter in his first letter warns the churches in view of the persecutions threatened by the world, how evidently full of solicitude he is lest Christians should be moved by this to turn back again to the world; and when we compare with this the tranquil, we might say the cold, way in which St. John speaks of the hatred of the world as of a thing so self-

understood and taken for granted that no one can be led astray by it; we shall come at once to the conclusion that our Epistle assumes towards the κόσμος a very different position from that occupied by the rest. The result of all that has been said is the conviction that in this document the difference between Judaism and heathenism is gone; that to it the κόσμος is not so much the sphere of Christian mission as the metropolis of declared and decided enmity against the kingdom of God; and that this hostile position has nothing astonishing in it, but is altogether natural and normal, so that no man need be embarrassed by it or led astray.

It is not from Judaism and heathenism as such, not from the world in itself, that the temptations proceed, but from anti-Christianity or the false prophets,—that is, from the endeavour to generate the world anew in the bosom of Christianity. The enemies are no longer *extra* but *intra parietes;* the perilous power is not the denial, but the simulation of the Christian spirit; their foes sought to be regarded as Christians, but Christians they were not; they had their point of departure from the church, but did not belong to it. They are essentially children of the world, and yet would be deemed children of light: it is a mixing together of light and darkness. Thus we have enemies of the church who are neither Jews nor Gentiles, but false Christians. It is true that this aspect of things is not peculiar to our Epistle: it is shared by Jude and the second of Peter, and in part even by some portions of the last Pauline Epistles. But it is precisely when we mark in what way these specific portions of Scripture confront the danger that we discern the altogether peculiar character of our Epistle. The former assume a tone of anxious care; we observe how the writers tremble for the churches, and how they gather up all their forces to preserve them, to warn them, to rescue them. We compare with their excited vehemence the tranquillity and peaceful bearing which our Epistle exhibits, as before to the world, so now to the anti-Christianity that threatens. Reading it carefully, we do not receive the impression that the churches

were or had been in any sore distress. When the antichrists are mentioned for the first time in ch. ii., express reference is made to the anointing which would defend the people of God from contact with every kind of lie, and which seemed to render every kind of exhortation superfluous. The words of the apostle do not give the idea that they aim at keeping back the readers from any apostasy which was closely imminent, but rather that he was solicitous to make all perfectly safe, and therefore represented to them once more how great was the gulf between them and all forms of anti-Christianity. So, when this enemy is introduced again in ch. iv., even then the exhortation to try the spirits is by no means the main concern, but is rather brought in ὡς ἐν παρόδῳ: the chief thing in the apostle's estimation is rather to make it clear how the *Christian* spirit must express itself. The former is only the foil to the latter. As when, in a firmly built house, the master, hearing the storm without, gives one more glance around to see that all is secure, while still he knows that he is sheltered and safe, and, indeed, the more furiously the tempest blows, feels all the more sense of security,—so it is with this Epistle, which gives us the feeling of an inexpressibly beautiful peace and silent confidence of joy diffused through it from beginning to end.

Anything like polemics proper is altogether absent from the document: its aim and tendency is essentially not negative, but positive. How little its general contents and character are governed by the controversy with antichrists, has been seen in the general scheme of its construction. The life which has appeared in Christ, and from Him overflows upon His people, is its leading idea. And this life manifests itself, as we have seen, in two directions: on the one hand it matures fellowship with God, and on the other fellowship with the brethren, through these manifestations bringing in the χαρὰ τετελειωμένη. This is its trunk, absolutely positive, on which all the particular developments of exhortation are grafted, not excepting the twice-repeated exposition of the antichrists. The first time these are mentioned it is in connection with walking

in the light: in relation to God and the brethren, this walk leads to union and fellowship; but as it regards the antichrists, who belong not to the φῶς but to the σκοτία, it leads to nothing but severance. And, on the second occasion of mentioning them, our δικαιοσύνη is spoken of as resting upon the possession of the Spirit of God, the true and only Spirit; and in connection with this, the acts of that righteousness are dilated on as diametrically opposed to those of the anti-Christian spirit. We might altogether omit the two passages which deal with the antichrists, and the Epistle would not lose its essential character or be changed in its scope: evidence enough this that polemics against them did not constitute its final aim.

But, however firmly established this is, there is another side to the question. Though it may seem to contradict what has been said, we cannot seize rightly the occasion and design of the Epistle *unless* we assume that the churches were heavily oppressed by the antichrists, and that they were to be defended against them by this apostolical letter. At the outset we must absolutely take it for granted that it was written for one occasion, that it owed its origin to some definite historical circumstance, and not to the mere leisure of the author. Now he himself indicates such a concrete historical occasion for his writing. For, when we find at the close an exhortation to the churches to keep themselves from idols, our exposition, as has been seen, requires us to regard this as a warning against the teachers of error dealt with in the Epistle. If this warning is the keynote of a letter which we have learnt to regard as one whole from beginning to end, one harmonious development, it must, of course, be in strict connection with this whole; it must, moreover, because forming the very conclusion, contain that very thought which the author has been before all things concerned about. As, further, the letter with this begins and returns back at the close to this,—to emphasize, namely, the firm assurance or security of the truth declared by the apostle, who presents that truth as a μαρτυρία,—the energy and

sedulousness with which he does this is to be explained only by the assumption that it was of importance to make firm this truth in the face of other teachings which were devoid of it: these other teachings, however, must needs, unless we surrender ourselves to random guesses, have been those of the antichrists. Nor is it to be overlooked, that precisely after his first delineation of the antichrists the apostle writes, *ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς*, which must be compared with ch. v. 13, where with the same formula the eternal life, which we have seen to be the essential thought of the Epistle, is exhibited as the substance of what preceded. Considering all this, we must admit that anti-Christianity was the immediate occasion of this epistolary communication.

Consequently the matter stands thus. The beginning and the end of the Epistle, as well as the two fragments of it which are concerned with antichrists, indicate that these occasioned the apostle's writing. On the other hand, the bulk of the letter is not in manifest connection with anti-Christianity as a subject; and, more than that, the sections which treat of it expressly come in as side-illustrations or adjuncts of the positive and leading thoughts. Now we might be tempted to suppose that the apostle pursued different designs; one of them being to warn against the antichrists, while the other aimed at presenting certain positive exhortations. But that indeed is not possible; for, first, the letter approves its unity as one uniform whole; and, secondly, these two aims are so blended and so interpenetrate one another in every section as to suggest necessarily that they rise together into a higher unity. And here comes in that character of the Epistle which has been indicated above: its rest and its peace, as if adjusted to the most joyful relations; its internal release from all the agitation of the world, as if its author were looking out from a secure haven into the tumult of the distant sea. All this taken together makes up the mystery of the writing. But its solution can be brought to light only when we seek and find the historical relations to which these apparently opposite traits are equally con-

gruous, and under which the Epistle must have taken precisely the form it has and no other.

Now the relations indicated are identically those to which the earliest tradition about the origin of the letter point. At the outset, the fact that it was referred to the latest period of St. John's life explains at once how it comes to bear a character so different from that of the other New Testament writings. Our apostle, that is, had not entered upon a new field of labour, such as St. Paul as a principle was accustomed to seek for himself, but he had taken over the field which that apostle had left behind to him. The churches of Asia Minor, and especially the Ephesian, to which our thought is directed by early tradition, had been introduced into Christendom through the long and assiduous activity of the apostle of the Gentiles, with advantages beyond most others. We at once understand, therefore, why our Epistle has no organizing character, but rather that of nourishing and establishing. Further, that the distinction between Judaism and heathenism as two defined hostile camps is so entirely absent, is natural enough at the end of the first century, and so long after the destruction of Jerusalem; for, after that event, the power of the Jews in persecuting the Christians lay simply in their hiding themselves behind the Gentiles, and thus declaring themselves to belong to the κόσμος. And that the whole non-Christian world summed up under this name comes here into consideration, not as a missionary-field, but as an anti-Christian principle, as μισῶν, is to be explained by this, that already at that time the energy of the gospel in founding and forming churches had receded to the second place; this characteristic belonged rather to the Pauline age; and what we know concerning the work of St. John assures us that it was not so much mission as cure of souls that lay near his heart. It had been long demonstrated that both Judaism and heathenism as a whole τὸ φῶς οὐ κατέλαβον. The hatred of the world had since the days of Demetrius so often declared itself, that it was confirmed and could no longer now be matter of astonishment. The enemy of these days was, in a peculiar sense, the spirit of false prophecy. We

know, indeed, that even in the lifetime of the apostle heresy had been in Ephesus brought to maturity by Cerinthus; and not only so, but, as has been already shown, the very omissions of the Epistle may be perfectly understood when it is referred to the Cerinthian Gnosis. All this proves, therefore, that the Epistle *must* have been written later than the other New Testament Scriptures, and that it *might* well have been written by St. John. That this latter was actually the case its peculiar characteristics make clear enough.

That there was probably no man who experienced the transforming and glorifying influence of Christianity to the same degree as the son of thunder, who once would have desired fire to come down from heaven, appears, apart from the Johannaean writings, from the testimony of the earliest antiquity. Even supposing the touching traditions about his declining life to be untrue, at least they are indications of the impression made upon generation after generation by the work and character of this apostle. Untrue legends, which become current in the mouths of the people, are important for history; though these traditions concerning St. John are not to be regarded as untrue. Let it be noted how admirably the character of our Epistle accords with what we otherwise know of the character of the apostle. On the one side there is a keenness of severity in the severance of light from darkness, and of the world from the kingdom of God, which betrays the son of thunder; indeed, we find such an ethical sharpness of definition as makes every little sin an evidence of the Satanic nature (comp. ch. iii. 4–11), such indeed as occurs nowhere else throughout the compass of Scripture. But, on the other side and concurrently with this, we feel a breath of most pathetic and most inward affection, from a spirit overflowing with love and strong in peaceful rest, such as corresponds precisely with those narratives, handed down from antiquity concerning his old age, which appeal so forcibly to our hearts. If we recall here again its consummate repose in the presence of the world's hatred, the impression made by the passages about Antichrist, as if apostasy to their company

were a thing clean impossible, though a reminding word might be still appropriate, all this, too, is perfectly reconcilable with the character of St. John. That the aged disciple, who through a long life had by faith and love brought himself into so close a relation to his Lord, was so thoroughly filled and pervaded by the riches of the grace which came to him through Christ that all the hatred of the world and raging of Antichrist failed to disturb him in his deep repose, that he could not indeed well understand how their attraction should be felt at all,—all is perfectly imaginable in his case. Simon Peter before this, in his second Epistle, when the times were disturbed and the lie had raised its head aloft, felt himself impelled with all the energy of his love to transpose himself back into the days when he had his Master's society, and also with all the energy of his hope to propel himself forward to the time of the perfected kingdom of God. So also our apostle, following his character out, and in harmony with his deep interior nature, must needs, in his old age especially, have still more abundantly felt himself impelled, while enemies raged around him, and the more they raged, to fasten his deep thought upon the glory of Him whom he had seen as He was, and whom he hoped to see as He is. Thus, in conclusion, it may be said that it is perfectly clear how St. John, with such a personality as his, was precisely so affected as the Epistle reveals him, so full of peace in a time of fiercest conflict, so much more occupied with positive construction than with defensive polemic against enemies.

But it is quite another question whether, after all, St. John could have written a *letter* like this from out of such circumstances, and as addressed to such circumstances. An apostolical missive might be expected to be not merely an expression of personal feelings, but by all means to impart something to the readers; and therefore it must needs be born out of the urgency of the particular time, and be strictly adapted to its necessity. However high our estimate of the Asiatic churches may be, it remains nevertheless certain that the Gnostic errors had not passed away

without leaving deep traces; in fact, that these errors were not overcome until after the hard conflict of a century. Now, when we seem to find in our Epistle so extraordinarily favourable a picture of the state of the churches in question, and mark that the apostle is everywhere not so much teaching and warning and exhorting as taking it for granted emphatically that they know all things, how can all this be made consistent with a time when the first love had grown cold? Must not the churches, when they read the Epistle, have felt themselves divided by an infinite gulf from the state of things which its contents presupposed among them? May we not suppose also that the apostle, with eyes sharpened by faith and love and experience, would have observed in the church in whose midst he laboured many kinds of imperfection? Would it not have occurred to him, or have been impressed on his mind, that the false teachers, however little influence they might exert upon himself personally, might be very dangerous indeed to the flock? Could he really imagine, supposing him to be at Ephesus, that the dangers and injuries were in other places so much less or so insignificant? Now, if there is any force in such questions as these, might it not be presumed that the communication would have taken quite another form, and have been much more urgent and hortatory, and I might say more anxious? Must not all these concurring circumstances, arising out of a view of the concrete necessities of the churches, have at least so far influenced the personal feeling and tone of the apostle as to lessen the profound peace and the absolute joy that we see to abound?

All these difficulties are obviated and the mystery of the Epistle solved if we assume that the apostle, when writing it, was in a position in which the relations of the churches were not immediately under his very eyes, not so near to him as to affect his feeling and shape his words. If, on the ground of the tradition that the Apostle John was a long time in Patmos, we admit that he wrote his letter from that island, this hypothesis will lighten up the whole. First, we may point to an incidental and external

circumstance, which does not indeed depend upon this fact for its explanation, but yet seems from this point of view to be most satisfactorily explained. The two smaller Epistles, which obviously came from the same hand as the first, send final greetings from the church in the bosom of which the writer had his residence. That needs no proof for the third Epistle; nor for the second, if we only grant that the *Κυρία* to whom it was addressed is a designation of the church, for then the *τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφῆς τῆς ἐκλεκτῆς* at the close are obviously the members of the community with which the apostle was then connected. But in our Epistle, on the contrary, there is neither any greeting from a church nor any greeting to one. The absence of the latter may be accounted for by the encyclical character of the document. But how shall the absence of the former be accounted for? It was natural that the apostle should omit that, if he happened to be at the time not in the midst of any church whatever.

If we only hold fast the supposition—more than that we need not call it—that St. John wrote in Patmos, what may be further assumed as to the character to which his interior life was moulded? He lived in relative seclusion, separated at least from all the excited movements of the outer world. For on this small island, which was certainly then no more frequented than now, he could only to a slight extent exercise any influence or carry on any work of an external character; and all the less must his work have seemed to him, the more familiar he had been with the energetic work of a large city. To him, at his age, it would be matter of doubt whether he could win back that larger influence, or whether the time of active work was not for ever gone in his case. Then, the great concern was to wait upon the blessed manifestation of the Lord, and ask of Him how he might prepare to meet Him worthily at His coming. The more he was shut in from exterior life, the more did he retire into the depths of his own being, and exhaust that which his faith gave him for his own good, and what he, in common with the whole church, was called to attain through the energy of that faith. Thus the internal and ethical

characteristics of the Epistle are no less explained than the apocalyptic tendency of its strain.

And the world, the κόσμος, had recently, by banishing him, not only given evidence of its internal severance from Christianity, but had also almost entirely cut off the apostle from its external fellowship. Now this perfect separation between them is precisely reflected in the cold, abandoned tone in which our Epistle speaks of the world throughout. Withdrawn absolutely from it, and his thoughts alternating between the first and the second appearance of the Son of man, there rested upon the apostle that blessed and peaceful sentiment to which his Epistle everywhere bears witness. There is generally that joy, tranquil but all the more intense on that account, which he knows whose sufferings have driven him into seclusion, and who feels himself alone with his God: like that which animated St. Paul when he sent forth from the solitude of his prison the Epistle to the Philippians, so pervaded with the atmosphere of joy. Anti-Christianity and pseudo-prophecy St. John would hardly find in the island of Patmos; for, even supposing that he had founded a little church there, that church would not probably have as yet been touched by such an influence, especially as all gnosis rested much on philosophical culture. But the report might reach him from without, that the false teachers had all the more powerfully and ruthlessly penetrated into the old churches because they were deprived of their apostolical shepherd. The intelligence of the πολλοὶ ἀντίχριστοι which were among them gave token to him of the ἐσχάτη ὥρα. Thus he felt himself moved to write to the congregations in which he had laboured, in order to exhort them to walk worthily of this last hour, and to arm themselves with the true and only parrhesia for the coming of the Son of man. And the apostle's position, thus assumed, accounts for the economy of the whole letter as we have it; this explains the tranquil stillness of his own mind, released from the bonds of this world, so full of the confident sense of the grandeur of Christianity as contrasted with the vanity of the false prophets,—in all this not disturbed by being personally in immediate contact with the unrest

and danger of the churches still living in the midst of the world.

May we not say that the divine wisdom found better means to strengthen the churches by this Epistle, penetrated by influences arising from the circumstances we have alluded to, than if the apostle himself had stood in their midst lifting up the most urgent warnings? Into the midst of the conflict of life, with its temptations and its distractions, he thus entered, himself untouched by them all, as if coming forth from another world,—must not that have prompted the feeling, "Put off thy shoes, for this is holy ground"? He is filled by the glowing experience (*χαρά*, *παῤῥησία*) which the Christian has who knows himself in possession of the great communicated gifts of life and sonship: what so effectually pierces the heart as the language of this calm and full inspiration? He speaks about that which the churches already are in accordance with their new nature (as partakers of the kingdom of light), and of what, in accordance with their destination, they are to become (as those who should have *παῤῥησία* in the day of judgment),—that is, he speaks of the positive objects and aims which Christianity places before every individual Christian: was not this the way to point the churches to so high and so comprehensive a work, that for mere idle speculation, the opposite of that practical work, and therefore for the seductions of pseudo-prophecy, they would literally have no time or thought? The apostle so deals with the great gifts and the great problems of Christian people, so opens to them the riches of what they have and are yet to have in Christ, that he takes the most effectual means of rendering it impossible that they should seek these riches anywhere else. The *interior* life of the church he would invigorate, he would consummate their union with God and with the brethren: that is the weapon which he puts into their hands for their better *external* warfare. Thus the secret of the Epistle is solved. We see that it is occasioned by the energetic working of anti-Christianity; but we also see that it is moulded by the personal position of the writer, and that this explains his peaceful and tranquil bearing, despite

their uprising: in fact, this very bearing is the means of defence approved and chosen by the apostle.

The utmost that we have reached by this series of explanations would be only the proof that it is *possible* to insert the Epistle, just as we have it, with all its apparently discordant peculiarities, into the course of St. John's life, and show its harmony with that life. But is the composition in Patmos, which we have relied upon, more than a mere hypothesis? We know that in recent times the apostle's residence there has been contended against; and, in very recent times, his work at Ephesus altogether. It certainly is not our business to come now to a new understanding with the records and traditions of the first centuries: for exegesis and biblical theology, our relation to them is taken for granted. Still it is necessary, when we yield our faith to tradition about a book as a whole, that we should be able to show that the internal character of the book is in harmony with this tradition. But what does tradition say in confirmation of the view that the Epistle was written in Patmos?

Certainly there is no tradition as to the place where the Epistle was written, nor as to its readers,—for the well-known error of Augustine we may leave out of view,—but there is one as to the place where the Gospel was composed. Now this at once includes the Epistle, if we acknowledge that the two writings were designed for the same readers, with the same object, and simultaneously written. It is true that we could not refer the ἔγραψα of the second chapter to the Gospel; and it is not right to regard the introduction of the Epistle (ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς ζωῆς) as alluding to it; for the Epistle itself is such an annunciation, which would never have been doubted if the expression had been rightly interpreted. The many passages of the Epistle which are parallel with passages in the Gospel must not be appealed to; for, while they show the identity of author, they say nothing as to the identity of time when both were composed. But this is important, that in a whole series of places—marked in our exposition, as especially ch. ii. 7, the ἐντολὴ καινή, and ch. iv. 17, v. 6—the Epistle is intelligible

only if we suppose the reader to possess a knowledge of the Gospel, not only in general, but also in detailed expressions. They are written as one would write who not only has the phrases current in the Gospel directly before himself, but also supposes them to be immediately under the eye of the readers too. Such allusions to individual phrases in another treatise are best explained by supposing that the writer has just finished writing them; and not only so, he must suppose the readers to understand them only if those readers are under their immediate influence: if some time had elapsed since the perusal, they could hardly be presumed or expected to understand them, especially as we cannot assume that individual Christians were furnished with copies of the Gospel. Further, this reconciles us to the form of the Epistle, the absence of the customary greeting at the beginning and the end: a circumstance quite appropriate if it was regarded as really belonging to the Gospel itself; as has been rightly observed, though weight enough has not generally been conceded to the remark. We see that in the two smaller Epistles, coming from the same hand, the apostle has adopted the usual style of greeting. He who wrote a gospel was possibly led to do so by some definite relations and circumstances, and wrote it primarily for a definite circle; but he certainly wrote it not *only* for that circle, and not *only* for these relations, but generally in the service of Christianity. And if the author of such a book accompanies it by a letter, which expounds the practical bearing of the history communicated,—and such is the relation of our Epistle to the Gospel,—then it is easily understood that the letter also would partake of the objective tone of the book, that the specific relations of the readers would remain untouched, that the definite circle of readers would from the outset recede in comparison of the universal company of readers for whom the book was intended. Thus, though the Epistle is sent primarily to an individual community, it is really catholic and encyclical in the highest degree: it is addressed to the readers of the Gospel as a whole.

Accordingly, if it is highly probable that the Epistle is most intimately bound up with the Gospel, then all that

has been urged about the place where the Gospel was written holds good also of the Epistle. And what is the current of tradition here? It testifies in two ways: one declares that Patmos was the place of its origin; the other speaks of Ephesus, though, strictly speaking, not so much as the place of its composition as the place of its publication. It is well known that earlier antiquity sought to harmonize the two: the Gospel was written in Patmos, issued in Ephesus. Certainly it were possible that the earlier tradition rested on a supposition which transferred the Patmos origination of the Apocalypse to the Gospel. But the Gospel bears traces in itself that it was not finished at one stroke, as we have it now. The last chapter is as certainly from the same hand as it is certain that it was written later than the rest. There is but one reason assignable for its being added, that is, to contradict the opinion that the apostle was not to die. If, then, St. John was at Ephesus when he wrote the Gospel, and knew that this opinion existed, would he not at once have incorporated the twenty-first chapter into the body of the work? If that opinion originated later, would not an oral energetic contradiction have sufficed to suppress it, and thus render the postscript needless? But how easily is all this explained and reconciled, if we assume that during his absence, and on the ground of the fact that he had saved his life during the Christian persecution, this notion sprang up and became firmly established in consequence of his not being there to suppress it! When he returned, he found it existing and very generally prevalent. Then he determined to add this postscript, to put an end to it wherever the Gospel should spread. That the original conclusion, ch. xx. 20, was left in its place, may be explained by the circumstance that many copies were already abroad, and that the work was no longer in the sole possession of its author. Thus, in fact, the two accounts as to the origin of the Gospel, and the old attempt to reconcile them, remain therefore justified. Moreover, this proves that the Epistle was primarily written from Patmos to Ephesus, and, with the Gospel to which it belongs, had a later and wider circulation.

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE EPISTLE.

But we have not only been concerned in our investigation to discuss the form of the Epistle. We have not only had to do with the *order* of the thought as the ground for conclusions as to the external and internal relations which originated it, but have sought to penetrate to the *matter* of the thought, and to present vividly before our minds the dogmatic-ethical views of the apostle. It remains that we undertake a recapitulation of this last point,—that is, sum up the fundamental principles of the Johannaean theology, so far as it lies before us in this Epistle. But we must first endeavour to explain our conception generally of the relation subsisting between the several orders of New Testament doctrine. It is not that St. John held something different from St. Paul as truth, and St. Peter something different from St. James: they all and alike announce one and the same truth in Christ Jesus, and in the work finished in His life and sufferings. But this divine truth, thus revealed, could not by any human spirit be embraced, in its totality, in all the inexpressibly various references and relations which are involved in it. It reflected itself in every individual mind, according to the variety of their several spiritual apprehensions. Not only did one aspect become prominent to one, and another to another, according to the several postures and necessities of each; but also the same side of truth, beheld by two persons, became to each a distinct image, because the eye of each was variously organized. What every apostle announces, accordingly, is truth, but not the truth in the absolute sense. THE truth is, in fact, only for God. What, therefore, we call the various apostolical types of doctrine or theologies is the synthesis between the one Object equally manifested to all, and the subjectivity of each distinct apprehension of that object. Hence, if we would understand the doctrinal system of any apostle, we must, above all things, form to ourselves a distinct idea of his entire spiritual peculiarity, of his natural subjectivity, in order

that we may be able to perceive how it came to pass that the same common truth thus and no otherwise reflected itself in him.

The easiest and surest way to proceed here is to make the Gospel our point of departure; for not only does the wider range of the Gospel allow more prominence to the spiritual nature of St. John's conceptions, but the very difference between the matter contained in it and that of the Epistle enables us, by comparison of the two writings, to perceive what was the peculiarity of the author. It has been long since exhibited, that the specific character of the Gospel consists in the penetration of the historical material by certain dominant and formative ideas. This view is common alike to the defenders and the impugners of its authenticity. He who objects against the truth of the facts recorded there, assumes that these have been invented or worked up for the sake of such ruling ideas; on the other hand, he who defends them, defends them in such a way as to show that the apostle so understood the facts as to place them in the light of the ideas immanent in them; but the author's own way of looking at all remains the same in both hypotheses.

If it may be permitted to apply to the style of an apostle's thought the later scholastic terminology, then St. John was through and through a Realist. *Universalia ante rem* is the principle of all his philosophy, of all his views. Ideas — light and darkness, truth and lie — are the true and actual reality, the principle of life out of which individual things emerge; mankind, the individual man, the particular action, are not otherwise than as the idea marked out for their existence prescribes; this is the thing indwelling in them, which moves them as a law, by virtue of which all that belongs to them is fashioned. Thus it is that history to St. John is not the sum of individual, free human acts, interwoven with each other and interpenetrating, but it appears to him one great organism,—if the word is not objected to,—a process the internal law of whose development is as much marked out beforehand, and as naturally flows from it, as the plant springs from its germ.

For all the particular is inevitably and immediately, consciously or unconsciously, in the service of a general principle. History is to him the working out of an idea, the body which it assumes to itself; and this body is naturally conformed to the soul which creates it, that is, to the idea: history is the invisible translated into the visible.

History has generally two faces: the one reflects in itself the expression of human freedom, the other a necessary orderly sequence of things; and that not as if these two gave place to each other, but both as being at one and the same time altogether present. All is at once the *entire* product of freedom, and the *entire* product of necessity. It is the latter of the two faces which has presented itself to St. John, and stamps its peculiar impress upon his book. Therefore we have in the Gospel no unexpected, surprising catastrophes; but we are conscious from the outset of the impression that thus and not otherwise the development must go on. Indeed, this further explains how it is that we sometimes miss anything like a continuous development: that, for example, the conflict with the Jews in the fifth chapter seems to be as deadly as in the twelfth chapter; that the discourses of the Baptist are so similar to those of Christ Himself; that what our Lord unfolds to Nicodemus is of the same character as that which He presents to the uncultured multitude. All this rests on the same principle. Because St. John has always in view the dominant idea, and will show its dominance, it therefore comes into the foreground of his representations; but hence also the gradual process of its realization, all the external differences of the several occasions receding comparatively into the rear. So is it with the discourses: the ideas which lie at the basis of the words of the Baptist and of the words of Christ are in the issue the same; and in order to show this plainly, the form is lost in which the idea was clothed according to the several peculiarities of the speaker and the hearers.

The same Realism which is stamped as a pervasive feature on the Gospel reappears in the Epistle. Here also

all leads up to the fact that the ideas, the general notions, light, truth, and so forth, are not to the apostle abstractions, but absolute realities, which, like the germ in the plant, are deposited in Christian natures, and condition all the outward expressions of their life. The most material difference between the two books is only this, that in the Gospel the fundamental facts are recorded through which the ideas have been introduced into this earthly life; while in the Epistle, on the other hand, it is shown how, on the ground of these, the life of individual men must be raised and fashioned. As to the form of the Epistle, it appears from what has been said that St. John cannot be said to communicate instruction proper in the ordinary sense; he does not impart propositions to the reader which he may receive as, so to speak, novelties into his understanding. For as he presupposes that light, truth, life are already present in the Christians whom he addresses, all learning and teaching is to him only remembrance in the proper sense; that is, a becoming inwardly conscious of what is in the man himself, a meditation upon that as already in the spirit, not the unfolding and discussion of the contents of these ideas. And as there is no proper instruction, so there is to our apostle no proper exhortation and commandment; for the substance of all precepts is involved in the ideas indwelling in the Christian: he not only knows in himself what God enjoins, but he does it from his own impulse; so that St. John's only command is ὃ ἐστιν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτοῖς,—that is, what, apart from any precept of his, has already become a reality in the readers.

This being the general spiritual point of view from which St. John sees all things, we have at once the one principle whence all his connected thinking must take its departure, the idea in which all others are involved, and from which all others grow as their germ. It is the idea of the Logos. As to the relation of the Logos to the Father, the Epistle certainly gives no specific determination; it does not in any passage speak of the transcendent, pre-temporal life of God, but from the outset regards the Logos as the φανερωθείς, who has entered into the historical sphere of

the world's movement and action. The proper historical process in St. John, according to which the Father giveth to the Son all that He hath, and the Son then again proffers His fulness to the world, is not made emphatic in the first clause of the Epistle; but it is the silent presupposition, known well to the readers from the Gospel. That such a presupposition there is, however, is most evident; for if, as an example, God is named φῶς in ch. i. 5, and in ch. ii. 8 Christ is τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, this most assuredly points back to the relation we have mentioned. But it is certainly the centre of our Epistle, as of all the Johannaean writings, that the Logos, apart from the question whence He received it, is the πλήρωμα of the divine essence, and that in order to communicate it. What the Gospel and Epistle both utter in their introductory sentences, is no other than the germ out of which the whole substance of both books is developed. Similarly, in ch. i. of the Apocalypse the recorded appearance of Jesus from heaven is the kernel, the sum of the whole book: the book is simply a commentary on that text. The Logos is the possessor of all life, of all light, of all truth; He communicates Himself to men, and, as the issue of this, mankind participates in the portion that the Logos has. Thus we understand how the ideas of truth and so forth are, as we saw above, to St. John not abstractions, but realities; because, that is, they are existent in the Logos, yea, they are the nature of the Logos. These are in men only because the Logos is in men. This is what the Epistle teaches in almost every chapter. When it is said in ch. i. that the blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin; when in ch. ii. brotherly love is taught as a new commandment, that is, not a new commandment of obligation to us, but a power ruling within us; when the idea of the μένειν ἐν Θεῷ καὶ Θεὸν ἐν ἡμῖν is made so prominent;—all this receives its full illustration in ch. iv., where all obedience to the divine commandments and all brotherly love are derived from the γεγεννῆσθαι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, or, what is the same thing, from the possession of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, that is, is ever to St. John the Spirit of the

glorified Christ. And this too is a matter presupposed in the Epistle, being derived from the Gospel. In the Gospel it is expressly announced and shown forth, how, in the economy of the work of the Logos upon earth laying the foundation for all else, that which He objectively obtained is now subjectively imparted to every individual. And it is of this personal and subjective appropriation of the redeeming work that the Epistle speaks throughout. It is so exhibited, however, that the Logos Himself as πνεῦμα imparts Himself to men; and thus the life of men is essentially nothing but the life of the Logos reproduced and fully formed in them. This entrance of the Spirit of Christ—that is, of the Logos Himself substantially—is the first act which is accomplished on man, through which he becomes a child of God, and subjected to the energy of the Logos.

It is plain from what has been said, that all Christian development is referred by St. John to a divine causality. The truth—that is, what is in God, which alone, therefore, can claim to be reality—is before any exhibition of it already in men; every approval of it in life is only the expression of the objective truth living in them. The life which is in man is so constituted, that it is simply the result of his having in him the personal Logos, or the personal life, through the possession of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the Christian life is to the apostle more than a mere process, not merely the natural and necessary development of the germs implanted in men; it is also the work of human freedom. The truth lies, as we have said, before any human activity in the subject himself, in virtue of the gift of the Holy Spirit; nevertheless, the requirement goes forth that he must ποιεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Similarly, all love of the brethren is an outbeaming of the love of God infused into him; nevertheless it is no mere rhetorical formula when the commandment to love is issued in his hearing. All that is done is, as we have already remarked, at once divine and human action; and if St. John makes specially prominent the former aspect, and brings that into the foreground, he does not on that account deny the latter.

As it is said concerning Christ in the Gospel that He has life from the Father and lives *δι' αὐτόν*, while, on the other hand, He does not lay down His life and take it again merely at the Father's will, but both are at the same time His own free act, so is it also with man. The side of human freedom is especially emphasized in the third chapter of the Epistle; and it is most evident in the twofold idea of sonship which we were constrained to establish: sonship as a gift by means of the impartation of the Spirit is the divine side of the matter; sonship as the working out of righteousness and brotherly love is, however, possible only in virtue of a concurrent human activity. Man must open his whole person to the Spirit of God, giving scope to His Divine activity; and that not only in the sense of a mere passive resignation, but by making that which God does in him the free act, at the same time, of his own personal individuality. And this conjunction of the natural human spirit with the Divine Spirit, this central activity of man himself, is faith. While St. John regards all human action as at once the result of birth from God and the result of faith, he has found the synthesis between the two factors, everywhere interpenetrating and running parallel with each other, of the divine and the human causality: the former being ever that which predominantly rules the apostle's thought.

Since all human acting is to St. John the reflection of the divine life, he places it in his Epistle under the norm of a twofold *divine* property: God is righteous, and God is love; and accordingly the human life is practising righteousness and practising love; the former being man's act as towards God, the latter as towards the brethren. Any further specialization and analysis of righteousness and love in their outward expressions in the various relations of life is not found in the Epistle: if only righteousness and love are both in the heart, they will know how of themselves to give evidence of their presence, without needing any specific prescriptions. *Αὐτὸ τὸ χρῖσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων.*

Up to this point we have left unconsidered the relation which St. John assumes to the doctrine of sin. Concerning

the origination of sin in the world of mankind he gives in the Gospel and in the Epistle no deliverance: he teaches only that it has come to us through the devil. Satan has founded a kingdom which stands in diametrical opposition to that of the light; and into that kingdom we are incorporated through sin. If God is the life, then obviously in the Satanic kingdom is the sphere of absolute death; if God is light, then darkness rules here; if in God is all truth, then here is nothing but lie,—that is, an existence which has only the appearance of life and reality, while in fact it is altogether void of substance, and maintains itself only through contradiction to the light. This kingdom of darkness has received into its possession the whole earth, with all that is upon it, so that *ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται*. We saw that in this passage the expression *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ* is to be understood in the masculine; and as such it is definitive as to the Johannaean view of sin. Just as God in the kingdom of light is the causality on which all depends, so it is in the kingdom of Satan. The Logos became flesh, and was manifested, to destroy this kingdom of Satan; and through His own manifestation has established a kingdom of light upon earth. Assuredly, they who have a part in this kingdom are not altogether without sin, and so far belong still to the kingdom of Satan; but this point of view recedes into the background throughout the Epistle. Since St. John enters less into the detail, the process of development of the Christian life, rather embracing the issue of the development in one comprehensive glance,—dwelling more on what we as Christians should be and shall be than on what we are at any particular time in our earthly course,—so also for the most part he sees in Christians only the enemies of the Satanic kingdom who are released from the despotism and service of evil. Over against them stands then the *κόσμος*, as the world not only *un*-Christian, but *anti*-Christian. For, in the manifestation of Christ not only has the power of God reached its culminating point, but the power of Satan also: the world has become anti-Christianity. And thus the history of the church is to the apostle one great warfare: the conflict

which in fundamentals Christ Himself waged through His earthly life with Satan is continued as a conflict between His members and the members of the Satanic kingdom.

But as the apostle gives no utterance on the question how the kingdom of darkness, properly speaking, originated, in what way Satan arose in opposition to God, so also he leaves perfectly untouched the question how the warfare between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness will be brought to an end. In the Gospel and in the Epistle he speaks only and always of the enmity between these two,—of the victory which Christians win, and so win that evil cannot come near them; but as to what will become of the kingdom of evil he says nothing. The evil one and evil itself are condemned, inasmuch as through the manifestation of Christ both as darkness are placed under the light; but as to any other external judgment upon them he makes no disclosure; this is beyond the sphere of thought occupied by our Epistle. The converse of this is, that the external form and final destiny of the church also, as well as of the corporate congregational life, lie beyond St. John's consideration: he has to do only with the relation of the individual Christian to God and to his own brethren. We may collate this with the fact that he has no ethical doctrine as such, that he communicates no instruction as to the way in which the Christian life is to adapt itself to the particular relations of life; but deals only with the general principles of δικαιοσύνη and ἀγάπη. In all this we discern a disregard of everything special or individual, and of everything external; the detailed formation of the personal life as well as the external organization of the community are left unconsidered. And we understand it well when we consider the distinctive characteristics of St. John's spirit, as unfolded above; according to which he contemplates rather the ideas lying at their root than the external appearances themselves, and, never lingering amidst the manifold outward forms of things, presses into the unity of the impulses which move in them respectively.

These remarks of course constitute not even a fundamental sketch of a Johannaean theology. For anything of

that kind the Epistle with which we have been occupied gives no material, since it everywhere rests upon the basis of the doctrinal principles of the Gospel. But it does furnish evidence enough to show how all thoughts on divine things were presented to St. John, in virtue of his own general style of spiritual contemplation, with a specific tone and colouring; and evidence also as to what that style of contemplation was. And this is a very important matter. What the net is to the chartographer, that is for the student of biblical theology the natural cast and tone of an apostle. For the first question is not to find out and show how one apostle may discuss any particular *locus* of dogmatics rather differently from another; but to seize so accurately the spiritual peculiarity and individuality of every New Testament author, as to know *why* the one truth has been in his mind so differently reflected, and reflected precisely in such a manner. An example taken from another science will show what we mean. When we compare with each other several great philosophical systems, no results come from the process if we merely isolate a single point and exercise our critical faculty on that: as, for example, the idea of space and time in Kant. If we have before us an actual system, then all the individual points in it hang upon the specific fundamental view of the philosopher himself. The system should furnish its own evidence of this fundamental view; and, conversely, the evidence that every individual point results from the one common principle. The various fundamental views of the philosopher, however, are not usually in antithesis as truth to untruth; but each of them usually, though as mixed with much error, presents one side of the truth. The main thing, therefore,—abstracting of course the error,—is to receive every such distinct glimmering of truth for itself, and thus, collecting the several colours into which the light breaks, to approximate more and more closely to the absolute truth. If we apply this to biblical theology, that which we observed above becomes plainer through the illustration. This specific branch of theological science furnishes solid advantage to dogmatics, not through its helping us to compare the

individual apostles on this or that particular dogma, but through its teaching us to penetrate into the general view which each apostle takes of the world and of God, following his own spiritual individuality, and to concentrate those several rays of truth into one most rich and perfect image, thus obtaining a point of view from which the picture is seen to embrace all those individual elements without disparagement and without exception.

And the advantage which the theologian has over every other investigator is this, that he needs never to make any deductions; that he finds error nowhere, but everywhere truth, though it may be truth seen under peculiar aspects. To such a fabric of biblical theology the author has desired to contribute a single stone: taking one little document of one apostle, he has sought according to his ability to obtain what, in the figure above, the net obtains for the draughtsman, that is, its general outline; and, moreover, to insert into the chart such points as our exegesis may have secured by the way. Even supposing that in both these respects all our results were sound, the chart is still far enough from being complete: it could be made such only by a similar treatment of the Gospel.

THE END.

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